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Israel: No Palestinian self-rule until 1994

Rabin-Arafat summit may be postponed

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israel warned Friday that there would be no agreement to implement Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho before 1994.

"Even if we manage to agree with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the differences are such that there is no chance of officially signing an accord for at least three weeks," a senior member of the Israeli delegation negotiating with the PLO said.

The negotiator, an army officer who refused to be named, underlined that the differences between the two sides concern not only questions of security, borders and the size of the autonomous area of Jericho, but also the powers to be devolved to the Palestinian council.

The comments came after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat failed to meet last Monday's deadline for an interim accord on implementation under the Sept. 13 autonomy deal.

The two leaders said Sunday they would talk again in about 10 days in another bid to overcome obstacles. However, Israeli Radio reported the meeting was off because condi-

tions were not right. Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben Ari denied the report saying no such decision had been taken.

The essence of the dispute lies in the interpretation of the entire declaration of principles signed at the White House.

Where Israel sees only limited autonomy, the Palestinians see a first step to an independent state.

"Do you want us to be like a Bantustan," Mr. Arafat asked Rabin last Sunday, referring to the autonomous zones set up for blacks by South Africa, the Yediot Aharanot newspaper reported.

"We are not talking about the permanent status but autonomy," Mr. Rabin reportedly retorted. "There is no question of giving you any symbols of sovereignty."

"The two sides are furthest apart on the question of the borders and crossings into Jordan and Egypt. Israel wants full control with nothing more than a symbolic presence of Palestinian liaison officers."

"It is unthinkable that our army would not be deployed all along the borders and at the crossing points," Mr. Rabin told Parliament this week.

However, the PLO is demanding control and offering to coordinate with Israel. Mr. Arafat explained that the Palestinians would not accept a situation in which Israel could shut off entry and exit to and from Gaza and Jericho.

One of Mr. Arafat's advisers, Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli Arab, told Israel Radio: "There is no guarantee an agreement will be signed in 10 days."

But he added that delay would have "very negative consequences" for the peace process and increase Palestinian frustration.

The Palestinian newspaper Al Quds reported that an Arafat-Rabin summit is to be held it will last three days in the Egyptian capital to give time to surmount all the obstacles.

Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho may have to usher in another year under the guns of Israeli troops. The delay could deepen public dissatisfaction on both sides and lead to an upsurge in violence.

Israeli Radio, quoting senior Israeli political sources, said Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat would not meet as planned on Dec. 23. It mentioned Jan. 6 as a probable alternative.

Hosokawa pledges to help Jordan cut debt

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa said Friday that he would make his utmost effort to help Jordan cut its debt.

Foreign Ministry officials said.

Mr. Hosokawa made the remark during a meeting with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, who arrived here last Saturday for a weeklong stay, the officials said.



Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali (left), who is on a visit to Japan, Friday holds talks with Japanese Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa at the latter's official residence (AFP photo)

Mr. Majali was quoted as telling Mr. Hosokawa Jordan was suffering from the after effects of the Gulf war, with debt and refugee problems. Mr. Hosokawa also said

Japan would support the Jordanian government's efforts to resolve the refugee problems, the officials said. Japan to finance projects, page 3

Jordan will not await PLO accord before reopening its banks

By Randa Habib
Agence France Presse

AMMAN — Jordan plans to reopen its banks in the Israeli-occupied territories even if the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) does not sign a Jordanian-Palestinian economic accord by Monday, officials here said Friday.

"We can no longer wait and if the PLO has not replied by Dec. 20, we will interpret this silence as an answer and will go ahead and open our banks," a Jordanian official said.

Jordan plans to endorse an economic accord Tuesday, reached with Israel under U.S. sponsorship, to reopen its banks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

During a visit to Amman on Dec. 5, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat did not sign a Jordanian-Palestinian draft economic agreement which has been ready since November.

Amman then gave the PLO until Dec. 20 for a final answer on the accord, dealing with financial matters and Jordanian banks' operations in the West Bank supervised by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

Palestinian officials said Mr. Arafat was hesitant about the accord, despite support for it from most PLO leaders, because of the power it gave the CBJ.

The PLO leader hopes Israel will give him the green light to establish a Palestinian central bank and to issue Palestinian currency.

CBJ Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi met directors of the country's banks on Thursday to brief them on the economic accord.

While the agreement au-

thorises Jordanian banks to operate in the territories, Israel will initially allow only one branch per bank in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, although the banks may request more branches. A future presence in East Jerusalem is still uncertain.

Before 1967, Jordanian banks had 20 branches in the West Bank, and two in the Gaza Strip, which Egypt administered.

The economic accord states that Jordanian banks which operated in the occupied territories will be entitled to reopen, officials said.

The banks must submit their requests to the CBJ, which in turn will provide them with two documents: A certificate of aptitude and a permit to open branch offices in the requested areas.

The banks can then submit their requests to the Israeli central bank, which will issue permits to operate in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

More than eight banks have said they wish to operate in the territories.

Bank of Jordan Director Tawfiq Fakhury told AFP his bank planned to open branches in Ramallah, Nablus, Hebron, Gaza City and Jericho and later in Jericho and East Jerusalem.

Tawfiq Al Khalil, an Arab Bank official, said his institution intended to reopen its seven branches in the West Bank after refurbishing them.

Jordan and Israel agreed on an agenda for future bilateral negotiations in Washington on Sept. 14, one day after the Jewish state signed a limited autonomy accord with the PLO for the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Israel, PLO near economic pact, but no deal without autonomy

By Lamin K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has made progress towards a bilateral economic agreement with Israel, but nothing will be signed until the two sides reach an agreement on Palestinian autonomy, Palestinian officials said Friday.

"The two sides are drawing close to an agreement," in talks in Paris, a Palestinian official said. "But it will only be signed simultaneously with two agreements regarding Israeli withdrawal from Jericho and Gaza and transfer of Israeli administration to the Palestinians."

PLO officials said that economic negotiations were much smoother than political talks over the beginning of an Israeli withdrawal. The Dec. 13 deadline stipulated in the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord has been delayed due to serious differences over the interpretation of the pact's provisions.

But the PLO officials said on Friday that the PLO had been able to secure some of its demands at the Paris talks. They said that Israel had agreed to total Palestinian con-

trol over direct taxes in Jericho and the Gaza Strip. "The situation will be different in the rest of the West Bank where Israel will still have control but no arrangements have been worked out yet," an Amman-based official said.

The agreed-upon provisions also involve opening the way for imports and exports between the occupied territories and the Arab World. Israel will allow the imports of Palestinian commodities — So far the Israeli market has been closed to products from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

There were still differences over tariffs, but Palestinian officials said the two sides might agree on "joint customs" to be imposed on imports.

The officials said that any Palestinian-Israeli agreement should not affect a draft Jordanian-Palestinian pact that will regulate monetary and trade between the Kingdom and the West Bank and Gaza.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has come under criticism for not signing the draft agreement during a short visit to Amman earlier this month.

"Arafat did not want to be bound with a signature that could be exploited by the

Israelis to undermine the Palestinian negotiations position in Paris," said an official, who has been in touch with the PLO leader over the issue.

According to the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement, the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) will regulate monetary policies and the Jordanian dinar would be the official currency in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Arafat is said to be demanding Israeli permission to set up a Palestinian central bank and issue a Palestinian currency as symbols of Palestinian sovereignty. There were no indications that Israel had accepted these demands or that they will be part of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

In the view of Mr. Arafat and some of his aides, an Israeli-Palestinian agreement should not have any adverse effects on Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

"We need Jordan's help to prevent the subordination of our economy to Israel and to support our quest for sovereignty," the official said.

The PLO Executive Committee, meeting in Tunis, was expected to discuss relations with Jordan amid rising pressure on Mr. Arafat to bolster coordination with Jordan.

Jordan to attend multilaterals despite reservations on venues

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will not boycott the multilateral working groups meetings in Arab capitals despite its reservations over moving the negotiations on regional cooperation to the Middle East area, a senior official said Friday.

Four Arab states have accepted to host multilateral peace talks, meeting one of Israel's long-term demands to move the talks to the region. Jordan has resisted the idea of Arab-Israeli negotiations in Arab capitals as "premature normalisation."

The steering committee of the multilateral talks, which reached its decision in Tokyo Wednesday, announced that the arms control talks will be held in Qatar, the refugees issue in Egypt, water resources in Oman and economic development in Morocco, the environment committee is to meet in Holland.

"We will not boycott the multilateral talks in Arab capitals," a senior official, who asked for anonymity, told the Jordan Times. He said that the Kingdom will participate since it is committed to peace and believes in the need to support any effort that would advance a solution to the Middle East conflict.

"We are going to carry on and push forward any effort towards peace," the senior official said, adding, however, that the Kingdom still considered the move to Arab capitals "too early."

Jordan was under pressure either to voice support for

moving the talks into the region or host one of the working groups in Amman. But the Kingdom insisted that it was "premature normalisation," and would appear as a good-will gesture when very little progress was being made on the bilateral level.

As the subject continued to come up during regional talks over the past year, Jordan worked to maintain this position "until such a time when Israel provides for real progress in the bilateral as well as multilateral talks," another Jordanian official said.

Officials privately maintain that the Kingdom's position shifted to "neutrality" when it became apparent that several Arab countries were willing to host the multilateral talks.

"We were not going to actively support the notion, but it also became clear that we couldn't successfully lobby against it," the senior Jordanian official said.

Officials recall that when the multilateral steering committee earlier this year proposed Tunisia as a possible venue for its next meeting on refugees, "We were not informed that Tunisia was going to accept the recommendation."

With the general mood shifting to accommodation Israel's argument that shifting talks to Arab capitals "would indicate strong commitment to peace talks," Jordan, according to the officials, decided on adopting a position of being largely "uninvolved."

Officially, the Jordanian government will attend the

multilateral talks in the host capitals, whether in Arab states or elsewhere, but will not host any of these meetings "until concrete progress is made from the Israeli side."

The announcement from Tokyo, carried by Agence France Presse (AFP), reported that Danielle Cortez, the head of the American team to the coordination committee, said that the negotiations of the five working groups will begin in the first quarter of 1994.

Syria and Lebanon continue to boycott the multilateral talks which they officially said were "premature" before bilateral talks resolve the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

While Jordan's position is more lenient on the issue, officials said, the Kingdom, in view of the Syrian and Lebanese position, could not appear to be the only "co-frostation" state to be hosting the working groups.

A large number of countries represented in the steering committee have expressed their desire to host the meeting of the working groups, according to American delegate Cortez.

The head of the Russian delegation to the committee said he was still hoping that Syria and Lebanon would join the meetings, stressing that Moscow had vital interests in the Middle East region and would pursue efforts towards peace.

Another decision taken by the committee said a subcommittee on communications would meet in Paris.

Yeltsin fires advisers after stunning setback in elections

MOSCOW (Agencies) — President Boris Yeltsin sacked more advisers Friday as reverberations from last week's electoral defeat for his reformist supporters rumbled on.

The government, struggling to put a brave face on an unexpectedly poor showing for the reformist camp in Sunday's poll, approved new privatisation plans for 1994 and soft loans worth \$120 million for farmers. Few details were available.

The deputy head of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Ostankino television channel, Valentin Lazutkin, followed his boss Vyacheslav Bragin out of a job, Interfax news agency said.

Mr. Yeltsin sacked Mr. Bragin on Thursday after critics accused the television chief of handing the election to ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy by giving him too much airtime. Pre-poll outsider Zhirinovskiy won an unexpectedly large chunk of votes.

Three Yeltsin advisers — economic experts Valery Burkov and Alexander Granberg and education expert Eduard Dneprov — were also axed on Friday by presidential decree.

The Russian arbitration court, monitoring the media, censured CIS television for broadcasting an unflattering profile of Mr. Zhirinovskiy on the eve of elections. Itar-Tass news agency said.

It said the film, the Hawk, should not have been broadcast because it insulted Mr. Zhirinovskiy. The film was shown on Saturday night in a clear attempt to dissuade the electorate from voting for Mr. Zhirinovskiy.

Critics said the attempt backfired and instead boosted the controversial politician's popularity.

Results still trickling in five days after the Sunday poll gave independent candidates another 24 seats, increasing the unpredictability of Russia's new parliament.

"It is already clear that this will not be the parliament of reform so long awaited by President Boris Yeltsin," Russian television said in its late news programme on Thursday.

The new lower house, the Duma, seems likely to consist of three distinct blocs, none of which commands a majority of the 450 deputies.

Near-complete returns from the central electoral commission confirmed 130-odd independents will form the biggest category.

Three reform parties will hold about 108, though it is not clear whether they will work together. Conservatives have about 80 and Mr. Zhirinovskiy's extreme nationalists about 65.

A presidential spokesman said Thursday Mr. Yeltsin will stick to his democratic reforms

despite the success of the nationalists in the elections.

"The new situation requires some personnel changes," Anatoly Krasikov said.

The main aim of those is the success of democratic reforms. Yeltsin has said clearly that he intends to stick firmly to the chosen course.

Mr. Krasikov indicated the bulk of the reformist ministers will stay in place, "those who are capable of promoting the democratic course, will be valued."

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Mr. Yeltsin's long-time rival, said that if the Russian government did not relax its reform policies the people would rebel and the army might even intervene.

He told Reuters in an interview the large vote for Mr. Zhirinovskiy was a rejection of the government's radical economic reforms.

"If the poor have no anchor to hold on to, then I have to say they will rise up, and decisively," he said. "Then the army might come out too and say 'no' to the politicians..."

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin sought to soothe Washington's nerves, telling U.S. journalists that "there is no need to be afraid of Russia, no reason to fear Russia."

IAF deputies end House dispute

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Members of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) parliamentary bloc, who Wednesday walked out from a session of the Lower House over a decision to cut short a debate on their proposal to set up a fact-finding committee about the Nov. 8 elections, have resolved their dispute with House Speaker Taher Al Masri and will continue to attend the meetings of the House.

All but three of the IAF deputies left the session in anger Wednesday after Mr. Masri decided to put to vote a proposal by Deputy Abdullah Akhu Isheideh to end debate on the IAF's motion, which the House killed with a strong majority.

The IAF deputies, who said the debate ended prematurely and before they were given the chance to articulate their reasons for establishing the committee, had turned down mediation efforts by deputies to return to the session, saying they would hold a meeting to discuss whether they would boycott the House in protest.

But "the dispute ended after a meeting with Mr. Masri (who) showed understanding for our position," IAF Deputy Hammam Said told the Jordan Times Friday.

"We will continue to attend the House sessions," said Dr. Said.

He said that during the meeting, which took place Wednesday evening, the IAF deputies explained to Mr. Masri that an issue as serious as setting up a committee to investigate the conduct of the elections should have been discussed more thoroughly.

"The man understood our position," said Dr. Said.

Over 10 deputies had spoken on the IAF proposal before the issue was killed, but the Islamist deputies had insisted that most of the lawmakers who expressed views on the motion were opposed to it.

Mr. Masri, who could not be reached for comment Friday, had argued that the seating order determined who among the deputies took the floor.

Supported by other parliamentarians, Mr. Masri said he was obliged by the internal regulations of the House to take a vote on whether the debate should end after Mr. Isheideh proposed so.

The House vote against the proposal constituted the first defeat of the 16-strong IAF bloc in the 12th Parliament, which saw the number of IAF deputies and their supporters reduced to about 22 from over 30 in the 11th Parliament.

The IAF deputies are expected to suffer another defeat when they push for adjusting a draft law on the sale of alcohol to meet the requirements of Islamic sharia.

The draft legislation would ban Muslims from producing, importing and selling alcohol but leave the door open for Christians to engage in the trade. The Islamists said they would push for a complete ban on alcohol, an industry which contributes about JD 40 million in fees and customs to the treasury annually.

The House Wednesday referred the draft law to its Judiciary Committee, which includes five IAF members and is headed by independent Islamist Abdul Baqi Jammo.

Donors commit \$570 million to help develop Palestinian economy

PARIS (Agencies) — Donor countries have committed \$570 million in aid to the West Bank and Gaza Strip next year, the vice president of the World Bank responsible for North Africa, Caio Koch-Weiser, said here.

He was speaking after the first meeting of the consultative group for the development of the territories held here on Thursday under World Bank chairmanship.

Mr. Koch-Weiser said that the participants had given their agreement to the main lines of the programme for emergency and technical assistance to Palestinians in these territories.

The amount of \$570 million "which is already in place, should permit the whole financing of the assistance programme."

The programme had been drawn up by the World Bank and the Palestinian Economic Development and Reconstruction Authority (PEDRA)

headed by Ahmad Qouriea. It has been presented in three parts covering the need for infrastructure, human resources and the private sector.

Mr. Koch-Weiser also said that the programme allowed for expenditure of \$1.1 billion during the next three years mainly for infrastructure and for current expenditure on Palestinian autonomy.

The mood of optimism at economic talks among the World Bank, donor countries, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel contrasted with gloom over the deadlock in political negotiations for an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area.

Mr. Koch-Weiser told reporters some of the initial money would have to go to paying salaries for the new Palestinian administration and police force.

He said some donors, notably the European Community (EC), were prepared to make a limited contribution to the run-

ning costs of the Palestinian administration. He strongly appealed to other countries to reconsider their reluctance.

Mr. Qouriea said the West Bank and Gaza would enjoy "no holiday from taxation" because the new administration would raise the same taxes as the Israeli occupation authorities had.

Mr. Koch-Weiser said donors had endorsed the Palestinians' emergency economic development and technical assistance plans.

The emphasised the need for the PLO and Israel to conclude an economic cooperation agreement rapidly and for progress in building self-governing Palestinian institutions.

Mr. Koch-Weiser said the \$570 million in firm commitments for the first year exceeded the amount pledged at an Oct. 1 donors' conference in Washington, when donors promised \$2 billion over five years.

Algerian presidency to be replaced before end of year

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The five-member presidency that rules Algeria will step down at the end of 1993 to be replaced by another presidential authority, Prime Minister Redha Malek said Thursday.

Mr. Malek, who spoke in a pre-recorded interview broadcast on Algerian Television, gave no hint of what form the new authority would take but said it would rule for a two-to-three-year transitional period to guide Algeria to democracy.

It was not clear whether the five men in the High Council of State (HCE), which has ruled Algeria since January 1992, would themselves step down or whether they might have a role in the new authority.

The HCE was formed after

the authorities cancelled a general election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was on the verge of winning. The party was subsequently banned.

Mr. Malek said that other institutions are likely to be created with the new presidential authority, including a "transitional council" of as many as 180 members to oversee the executive.

The new authority will also choose a cabinet, Mr. Malek said, without saying whether he expected to stay in office. Mr. Malek is both prime minister and a member of the HCE.

In October the HCE named an eight-member national dialogue commission to talk with the legal political parties to chart out the transition period

and its institutions. The talks were ultimately to lead to a "national conference" on the matter.

Although the HCE has always been due to step down at the end of 1993, there has been some speculation its mandate might be extended because the national conference had not been convened.

Earlier this month one of the commission's members said the conference could be held in the first few weeks of January.

An Algerian Islamic group said meanwhile it killed 12 Croatian and Bosnian technicians at an engineering camp outside Algiers, the London-based Al Hayat newspaper reported.



Workers and the Algerian crew of a C-130 fundamentalist Armed Islamic Group (GIA) Thursday unloads the body of a Croatian worker killed in Algiers Tuesday by activists of the group opposed to the government (AFP photo)

Aideed's militia scoffs at suggestions to sideline him

ADDIS ABABA (Agencies) — The militia led by Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed dismissed Thursday the notion that the United Nations could push him aside by ignoring events in Mogadishu while rebuilding the rest of the country.

Mr. Richard McCall of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) told reporters in Washington Wednesday that such an approach might succeed in isolating Gen. Aideed and his main rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammed, who control Mogadishu between them.

"If Aideed and Ali Mahdi and some of the other warlords are more concerned about who's going to emerge as a leader at the national level in Mogadishu, they increasingly could become irrelevant in this process," Mr. McCall said.

But Aideed spokesman Mohammed Abdul Karim Ali said: "Leaving Mogadishu alone and trying to develop the rest of the country is out of the question. Mogadishu is the heart of Somalia, curing a person without his heart does not help him survive. Somalia without Mogadishu cannot survive."

Gen. Aideed has been stranded in Addis Ababa since peace talks collapsed there last week. The United States has

declined to provide a plane to fly him back to Mogadishu.

Mr. McCall said that if Gen. Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi had their way "we might as well leave today and be prepared to go back in five or six months from now with a massive relief effort."

Asked if Washington was prepared to let Gen. Aideed and his rivals battle it out in Mogadishu while donor countries turn their attention to rebuilding other regions of Somalia, Mr. McCall said: "Yeah, I'm saying that."

Mr. Abdul Karim countered that bringing about peace in Mogadishu, which Gen. Aideed and Mr. Ali Mahdi have been struggling to control since January 1991, was the key to reconciliation in the rest of Somalia.

Washington and the United Nations have been trying to find a credible policy for Somalia after extracting themselves from the bloody and unsuccessful military hunt for Gen. Aideed.

When they stopped fighting him, they tried to flatter him into negotiations instead. With that strategy crumbling, it appears increasingly that officials want to ignore him.

Another strategy the United Nations wants to pursue is to persuade other factions to form an interim government

and restrict aid to them while leaving Gen. Aideed out in the cold.

U.N. officials think that starving Gen. Aideed's territory of aid will undermine support for him.

But few believe it is possible for Somalia to function economically without the port in south Mogadishu.

The United Nations concentrates about 15,000 troops, about half its entire force, in the city. Perhaps a million people or a sixth of the population, live there.

Aid officials say Gen. Aideed's militia is stealing about a third of the aid coming into Mogadishu. His supporters relied on this source of funds throughout the famine last year.

Mogadishu remains the political prize that all two dozen factions covet. Somalis also point out that fighting is not confined to Mogadishu and clans have revived feuds in several parts of the arid country in recent weeks.

Aideed convoy disarmed

A U.N. military spokesman said on Thursday he believed that a rival Somali clan had disarmed a convoy of "technical" battle wagons sent to pick up Gen. Aideed on the Ethiopian border.

Ashrawi steps down to be human rights advocate

RAMALLAH, Occupied West Bank (AP) — Whenever violence erupted in the occupied lands or political disputes threatened peace talks, Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi stepped up to the microphones to speak for the Palestinians.

Her job as spokeswoman made her arguably the best-known Palestinian after Yasser Arafat, and certainly the most prominent woman in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

As a reward, the 47-year-old professor of English literature was offered the post as the ambassador in Washington and a senior role in the Palestinian self-governing authority to be created in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

Instead, she has chosen to quit to form the Palestine Independent Commission on Human Rights, a post that could soon make her a thorn in Mr. Arafat's side.

In an interview with the Associated Press Thursday, Dr. Ashrawi confirmed that she was abandoning her role as Palestinian spokeswoman, a position she said had always been unpaid, unofficial and voluntary.

"I wouldn't say that he (Arafat) was happy," she said of her decision to leave. "But I didn't want to be part of the authority. I wanted to put an end to the speculation and attempts at persuasion."

Now, she is turning her hand towards fund raising. Dr. Ashrawi said Sweden donated one million kronor, the equivalent of \$119,500, to the human rights project on Thursday.

"People will not put up with the suppression of rights and freedoms after years of occupation," said Dr. Ashrawi, chain-smoking Salem menthols between sips of bitter black coffee served in a glass. "We need to establish a system of checks and accountability."

Dr. Ashrawi lives with her husband Emile, a photographer and artist, and daughters Zeina, 12, and Amal, 14. Their house is across from an Israeli military court and prison that is encircled by guard towers and barbed wire.

Three bodyguards patrol as a steady stream of visitors appears. One woman sought her help in a divorce while another begged Dr. Ashrawi to prevent an eviction by a landlord.

Dr. Ashrawi is more of an outsider at home than her image abroad would suggest. She is an intellectual in the midst of a street rebellion run by teenagers, a Christian in a predominantly Muslim society where Islamic militants are gaining influence. She is a woman among men.

Dr. Ashrawi had threatened

to quit as PLO spokeswoman once before, joining other West Bank and Gaza leaders in a protest last summer over Mr. Arafat's failure to consult them before deciding key issues.

But this time, friends and associates said, her popularity abroad and her accessibility to the Western media created jealousies in the upper echelons of the PLO and compelled her resignation.

The Israeli newspaper Maariv, however, said she left because of Mr. Arafat's mercurial outbursts at Palestinian officials and foreign dignitaries alike.

The paper said the final break came when Mr. Arafat berated Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt for calling him "chairman" instead of the "president of Palestine," his formal title but one that is not recognised outside the Arafat World. It said Dr. Ashrawi tried for 15 minutes to calm Arafat.

Dr. Ashrawi called the Maariv account "totally fabricated" and said she had not quit in anger. She said she came away from her job "with a better understanding of the complexities of the problem."

She believes the peace process has brought about a major change in the way Palestinians and Israelis think about each other.

"But I'm not saying we are out of the woods yet," she added.

Dr. Ashrawi stressed that her organisation would be independent, seeking access to records and documents of the new Palestinian self-rule authority to investigate alleged violations and review all legislation and regulations.

"It is an essential requirement. We can't have accountability and be dependent on the (self-rule) authority," she said. (See special report p. 2)

"It will take persuasion, maybe pressure," said Dr. Ashrawi. "But mostly it's a matter of making concrete suggestions, not just sitting back and criticising."

She said her group would issue reports that would be critical if necessary of the Palestinian authority.

Such work, however, may be dangerous. Assad Abdul Rahman, a political scientist in Amman who is slated to be in the organisation, said it would look into inter-Palestinian violence, including the killing of hundreds of suspected collaborators by self-appointed Palestinian vigilante groups.

"Anyone who wants to join such an organisation should be psychologically prepared to be a martyr," he said.

Arafat chairs Tunis meeting

TUNIS (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat chaired a meeting of the PLO Executive Committee here on Friday, called to discuss problems in implementing the Israel-PLO autonomy accord, Palestinian officials said.

Mr. Arafat was due to brief the committee on his meeting in Cairo Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, at which the two leaders decided to postpone implementation, originally due to begin on Monday, and meet again in about 10 days.

The PLO Executive Committee was also due to resume discussions on the composition of the interim Palestinian National Authority, which will administer autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in line with the autonomy accord signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

The authority, to be headed by Mr. Arafat, was the focus of a preliminary meeting in Tunis on Dec. 3.

The PLO leadership was also expected to discuss international financial aid for the autonomy scheme.

The officials did not say how long the meeting would last. Mr. Arafat returned to his headquarters overnight Thursday following visits to the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Britain and Ireland.

Implementation of the autonomy plan has been delayed because of disagreements over security, border controls and the size of the autonomous area of Jericho (see separate story).

Ireland told Mr. Arafat Thursday it would more than double its annual aid to Palestinians in the occupied territories.

"Ireland is very happy to make a contribution of \$1 million in 1994 and to continue that level for the next five years," Tourism and Trade Minister Charlie McCreery told Mr. Arafat on the Palestinian leader's first official visit to Ireland.

Ireland provided \$450,000 in 1993.

Mr. Arafat was in Dublin in the final leg of a European tour aimed at garnering support for Palestinian self-rule. He met Prime Minister Albert Reynolds and Foreign Minister Dick Spring as well as President Mart Robinson.

Rabin rejects Israeli reports Arafat is mentally unstable

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin believes Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat is all there, dismissing on Thursday persistent Israeli reports that the Palestinian leader is mentally unstable.

"I think that all this talk is not serious. I sat with him in conversation and he spoke from his point of view with great logic," Mr. Rabin told reporters who badgered him to comment on the reports.

"It was not acceptable to me, but it was with great logic," he added.

At the same time, Israel has set up a special team headed by Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur to examine Mr. Arafat's personality and study his handling of the peace negotiations, Israeli Television second channel reported.

The team will include academics and psychologists, an unidentified senior government source said.

The danger of an imminent mental breakdown by the 65-year-old Arafat, head of the PLO for over 25 years, has been splashed in banner headlines across Israeli tabloids.

"Arafat in serious mental state," said Yehudit Ahronot, Israel's largest daily.

In public and private meetings, he has been quick to take insult and attack in anger everyone from foreign dignitaries to Palestinian journalists. His closest aides have threatened to leave because he kept them in the dark about developments in implementing the peace accord that they helped negotiate.

Reports quote aides as saying they worried that his plane crash in April 1992, which later forced a brain operation, or his marriage to a woman half his age had affected his judgement.

Implementing the autonomy accord has been delayed because Israel and the PLO have not been able to agree on the security arrangements, including who controls the border crossings with Egypt and Jordan and how much land Israel will vacate around Jericho.

Israel is heavily dependent on the force of Mr. Arafat's hero status among Palestinians, increasingly opposed to the peace accord, to see it through.

Iran's chief justice calls for Khamenei to lead all Shi'ites

TEHRAN (AFP) — The chief justice called Friday for Iran's spiritual guide, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to be designated as the sole leader of Shi'ite Muslims throughout the world.

Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, at weekly prayers, said Ayatollah Khamenei had all the right qualities to serve as "marja-e-taqid" (source of reference) for Shi'ites, most of whom live in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan.

"In a country ruled by Islam, we can not have different leaders for politics and religion," he said. "We need to have order, a concentration of religious authorities."

"I would say no one but Khamenei deserves" to succeed Grand Ayatollah Ali Akbar in the post, said the chief justice. He was "the most qualified" in Shi'ite Islam.

Last week, Iran's religious leadership named 90-year-old Araki as Marja, following the death on Dec. 9 of Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Reza Golpayegani.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinian support for peace deal erodes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Initial support for the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace accord among Palestinians has dropped, with more people unsure now about the agreement, a poll released Thursday indicated. Just 41.5 per cent approve of the accord that will provide self-rule for Palestinians in the occupied territories, down from 65 per cent in September when the deal was reached. Also, 38 per cent now disapprove of the accord, up from 27 per cent. Twenty per cent of those questioned said they were "not sure" about the deal, as opposed to 6.6 per cent in September, pollsters said. The poll was carried out by the Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies, based in Nablus, which questioned 1,137 randomly chosen Palestinian adults in the occupied Gaza Strip and West Bank, including Arafat's Jerusalem. Pollsters said there was a 3 per cent margin of error in the face-to-face interviews. But polls among the Arab population are often difficult due to a traditional reluctance to voice opinions in public.

Jewish group protests Bonn-Tehran ties

BONN (R) — A U.S. Jewish group on Thursday criticised Germany's ties with Iran and said Bonn's argument that Tehran could only be coaxed into the international fold through dialogue was a cover for purely commercial interests. An American Jewish committee delegation touring Germany was due to meet Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and would protest against Germany's policy towards Iran, said spokesman Andrew Baker. "We think Germany's ties to Iran are unhelpful and counterproductive," said Mr. Baker, calling Tehran a main sponsor of international terrorism, he said. Germany has pursued a dialogue with Tehran at a time when most Western nations were keeping it at an arm's length until it distances itself from guerrilla groups, improves its human rights record and withdraws a death edict for alleged blasphemy against British author Salman Rushdie. In October, Germany triggered off angry protests from Washington and London for allowing a visit by Iranian intelligence chief Ali Fallahian, which chancellery aide Bernd Scandbauer justified on humanitarian grounds. A month before, Chancellor Helmut Kohl phoned Iran's president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. The call coincided with news that German electrical giant Siemens AG had won a six million mark (\$3.5 million) contract to supply software to the state-owned Iranian Telecommunications Company. "We feel that it's not only dialogue that Germany is interested in," said Mr. Baker. "There is also business going on." Dialogue is just an excuse to do other things.

Kuwait to give Palestinians \$25 million

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, still smarting from Palestinian support for Iraq during the Gulf crisis, said on Thursday it would pay \$25 million for Palestinian reconstruction in the occupied territories. Ambassador to France Tareq Rizouki told a conference on Palestinian development the emirate wanted the money to go towards Palestinian education, housing and health, the official Kuwait News Agency reported from Paris. Kuwait will select the projects in coordination with the World Bank and make the money available through international agencies, the agency quoted him as saying. The money will not be channelled through the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), its representatives or subsidiary organisations, he was quoted as saying. Mr. Rizouki was speaking in Paris at the inaugural session of the bank's consultative group for the occupied territories, the agency said. Kuwait severed its once close relations with the PLO during the 1990-91 Iraqi occupation in retaliation for the organisation's support for Baghdad during the crisis.

Attorneys for Libyans ask court to dismiss case

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defence lawyers Thursday asked a federal court to dismiss a criminal indictment filed against two Libyans accused of bombing Pan Am Flight 103, saying the charges were politically motivated. Attorney Frank Rusino and Jon May filed a motion in U.S. district court in the District of Columbia. The motion accuses the United States of not being serious about getting to the bottom of the case since it has failed to provide Libya with an official copy of the records of its investigation. That's a violation of the Montreal Convention, an international extradition agreement, they said. "The indictment is politically motivated and a foreign policy tool," of the Bush administration, the motion said. "Both the defendants and the government of Libya are victims of a massive cover-up to protect Syria and Iran from their rightful blame." Attorneys for the families of the victims of the crash called the suit frivolous.

Assad tells U.S. team Syria wants peace

DAMASCUS (R) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad told a U.S. Senate delegation on Thursday that Damascus was committed to the Middle East peace process, officials said. They discussed developments in the two-year-old Arab-Israeli peace talks and how to remove obstacles, the officials said. Syria last week responded positively to U.S. calls and agreed to resume talks with Israel after a suspension of more than three months. After 11 rounds, the talks are deadlocked over the issue of the Syrian Golan Heights. "The president briefed the delegation on Syria's stand regarding a number of issues concerning the region and affirmed Syria's commitment to the peace process and the objective of a just and comprehensive peace," one official said.

Libyan still missing after six days

CAIRO (R) — The fate of former Libyan Foreign Minister Mansour Kikha remained unknown six days after his mysterious disappearance in Cairo, the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) said on Thursday. Libyan opposition leaders fear Mr. Kikha, who has lived in exile since 1981, has been abducted by Libyan government agents. In a statement faxed to Reuters, AOHR said it had been informed by the Egyptian authorities that Mr. Kikha, 62, was not in any of the hospitals nor under the detention of any security authorities in Egypt. "The preliminary results double the fears of the AOHR on the fate of Mansour Kikha, particularly since his disappearance was preceded by veiled threats from within Libya on wiping out the opposition and the bloodshed of some opposition leaders living abroad," the statement said. Libya vowed on Sunday to crush exiled opponents of colonel Muammar Qadhafi's government, calling them traitors.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Pil Et Hercule
18:30	L'Ecole Des Fies
19:00	News in French
19:15	Ushuala
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	The Fanelli Boys
21:00	Da Beal On
21:30	Perspective
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature Film "Bird On A Wire"
PRAYER TIMES	
05:42	Fajr
06:25	Sunrise/Duha
11:32	Dhuhr
14:16	Asr
16:29	Maghrib
18:01	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch, Tel. 810740	
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637385	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637441	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622306	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Amman International Church Tel. 625526	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 834328	
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 833824, 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be moderate with clouds appearing at different altitudes, and winds will be southeasterly moderately. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	4/19
Aqaba	9/22
Desert	1/17
Jordan Valley	8/21
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 16, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 36 per cent, Aqaba 39 per cent.	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih	756988
Dr. Fakhri Tayeh	888380
Dr. Bassim Oudumi	648633
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad	846070
First pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asena pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	626372
Al Salam pharmacy	636740
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Najih pharmacy	847632

ERBIL:	
Dr. Ali Al Shuqairi	236140
Al Quds Pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:	
Dr. Ghassan Al Faqih	906130
Khalidh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661141
Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	845402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Police Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdullah Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	
Commuter	636381

UJ Flight Information	633000
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	06-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:	
Husseini Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	644281/6
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn.	644241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	664171/4
Palestine, Shmeisani	664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Musader Hospital	667277/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen	777019/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Mariti	891610/5
Queen Alia Hospital	602240/30
Amal Hospital	674155

ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900690
Im Sa Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09) 909990

ERBIL:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
St. George Catholic Hospital	(02)275555
Im Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247100

AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)3141

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (0815330-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30	Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)
09:25	New Delhi (RJ)
09:25	Aqaba (RJ)
09:30	Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
09:30	Beirut (RJ)
10:40	Vienna (OA)
10:40	Rome (AZ)
15:18	Dubai (EM)
16:45	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

Jordan, IMF finalising stand-by 1994 agreement

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

MAN — Jordan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are putting final touches to a stand-by agreement under which the Kingdom undertakes to introduce a sales tax as of beginning of 1994, in return for a \$80 million loan from the IMF, sources said Friday.

The sources said a team of technical experts, who arrived here early December, had been working on the agreement, which is expected to be signed this week by representatives from the IMF and the Jordanian government.

The agreement, which is valid for one year, said most important measure Jordan has to implement is the economic restructuring programme agreed with the IMF, which includes the introduction of the sales tax.

The tax was supposed to go into force early this

year, but political considerations, in an election year of 1994, delayed its implementation.

"There cannot be any more delays in introducing the sales tax," said Dr. Fahed Faneh, a noted columnist and economic analyst.

The draft law has been ready for some time now and is expected to be sent to Parliament soon.

The sources said the IMF, which is sympathetic to Jordan's concerns and supports the Kingdom's efforts to address its foreign debt, had found "everything in order" in terms of Amman's adherence to the economic restructuring programme. They said the IMF did not have any problems with the Kingdom's 1994 budget either.

The JD 1.487 billion draft budget is before Parliament now.

"We don't foresee any prob-

lem in finalising the stand-by agreement soon," said one of the sources, adding that the document would take effect as soon as the IMF board of directors approved it.

Subject to the finalisation of the document, Jordan is also expected to receive \$70 million to \$80 million in credits from the World Bank for the Kingdom's agriculture sector.

"Pre-appraisal work is under way now," said another source, referring to the loan, which will be matched by a similar amount from as yet undetermined sources. The loan will carry commercial bank interest rates and will be repayable in 20 years.

Jordan has already received another \$80 million World Bank loan for its energy sector. The loan is matched by a similar credit facility from the Japanese government.

The stand-by agreement with the IMF will also clear the

way for the international financial watchdog to issue a certification that Jordan is abiding by the economic restructuring programme.

Such certification is essential for Jordan to open fresh debt rescheduling agreements with the Paris Club of creditor governments.

Talks with the Paris Club are slated to begin in February after Jordan secured an extension from July.

Jordan last week finalised an agreement with the London Club of creditor commercial institutions covering \$875 million in principle and outstanding interest.

It was Jordan's first-ever agreement with its commercial creditors since it started implementing the economic restructuring programme in 1988. The programme was interrupted by the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, but Jordan and the IMF picked up from it was left off in 1991 and renewed it.



SPECIAL PRAYERS for rain were organised in Amman Thursday by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. Among the worshippers were Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Minister Abdul Salam Al Ahbadi, the chief Islamic justice and other officials (Petra photo)

Faithful pray for rains

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanians held special prayers Thursday morning for rain after a dry spell of five weeks during the annual season.

The prayers were organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and were attended by Minister Abdul Salam Al Ahbadi and senior clerics.

Meteorology Department Director Ali Abanda said the situation had not turned critical although five weeks of a dry spell during the annual October to May rainy season were worrying, but he pointed out that some parts of Jordan received some rains last week.

"Two or three good spells in January and February should take care of the shortfalls in the annual average so far," Dr. Abanda said.

"It is only natural that people get worried when they do not see rains for five weeks

during the regular period," he said.

According to Dr. Abanda, the southern regions had almost 200 per cent of their annual rainfall since October while the northern and central regions, including Amman and surrounding areas and the Jordan Valley, had received only 50 per cent.

The seasonal average in the south is around 30 millimetres while the region actually received up to 55 millimetres, while in the north it was half, he told the Jordan Times.

Annual rains in Jordan range from 100 millimetres in the south to 300 millimetres in the northern and central regions, while in the mountainous regions they reach up to 550 millimetres, he said.

In the eastern deserts neighbouring Iraq and Saudi Arabia, the annual rainfall ranges from 35 millimetres to 75 millimetres, he added.

The shortfall in rains in the Jordan Valley, the Kingdom's farming belt, should not cause

too much worry, he said, pointing out that farmers in the region depended on irrigation water rather than rains for their needs.

"For the Jordan Valley, rains are complementary in nature," he said, adding that as long as catchment areas received rains to replenish surface water reserves and underground aquifers there was no reason for undue worry.

In any event, Dr. Abanda said, "we are hopeful the January and February will see enough rains to ride out the shortfalls."

Jordan received unusual rains last season and agricultural experts and water strategists said the Kingdom was in a good position to cope with its minimum water needs if the same amount of rains fell this season.

Dr. Abanda said the Meteorology Department regularly resorts to cloud-seeding for artificial rains whenever the given in the weather pattern allowed it.

Japan agrees to finance Jordanian projects

TOKYO (J.T.) — Japan has decided to take part in financing the energy sector in Jordan, according to Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Fuji.

Speaking after a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, Mr. Fuji said that Japan would seriously consider financing other Jordanian projects in the fields of transport and telecommunications.

During his current 10-day visit to Jordan, Dr. Majali had submitted to the Japanese government a list of development projects to be carried out in Jordan, requesting Japanese financial aid for their implementation, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Petra said Dr. Majali also met the head of Japan's International Development Fund and discussed with him financing of Jordanian projects.

Japan had extended \$750 million in soft loans to Jordan in the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly to help the Kingdom cope with the negative effects of the Gulf crisis in 1990 and 1991.

Dr. Majali had earlier met with Emperor Akihito and handed him a message from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Dr. Majali also met with Japan's Foreign Minister Sotomatsu Hata and discussed with him developments in the Middle East peace process and economic relations.

The Japanese foreign minister promised that his country would examine financing of Jordanian development schemes, Petra noted.

Obtain a national number ... now

By Rana Hussein

MAN — The government is urging the people to undergo procedures needed for obtaining a national number as of January 1, 1994, in order to be printed on passports, family books and identification cards.

According to a circular issued by the prime minister's office, every holder of a family book must have a national number printed on a member of the family, unless this is done, government institutions will not provide any service to any individual who does not have the national number.

According to Mohammad Moheldin Keilani, director of public relations at the Department of Passports and Civil Registration, the department initiated the national number system in March of 1992, and 80 per cent of the citizens have received a national number since then.

Every Jordanian citizen who carries a family book and a five year passport was assigned a number, said Mr. Keilani.

"When a citizen wants to renew his/her passport or obtain a new one, the department affixes the national number from the family book," explained Mr. Keilani.

He said the number of citizens seeking to obtain a national number has increased after learning that the Ministry of Supply will not issue a ration card unless there is a national number listed on family books.

"The Ministry of Supply is cooperating with us to guarantee that all citizens have national numbers in the next few months," Mr. Keilani said.

The official stressed the importance of identifying every citizen with a national number because it will ease the work in

all governmental departments.

The new system, he maintained, would help all departments obtain any necessary information regarding any citizen without confusing persons who might carry the same first and last names.

Mr. Keilani urged all Jordanian citizens who have a family book and have not yet obtained a national number to call at civil registration departments to get a number. He noted that the passport department will ensure that every citizen in the Kingdom receives a national number in the next few months.

change of ideas and proposals on dealing with underground water issues which are of concern to the whole Arab World.

The seminar, which was organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and the Canadian Embassy in Amman, was attended by delegates from the U.S. and Canada, in addition to Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Bahrain, Oman, Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

Dr. Mohammad Shatanawi, head of a committee that prepared for the conference, said in a statement Thursday that recharging of aquifers was considered by the participants as necessary in view of growing demand and high water consumption.

Describing the outcome of the seminar as positive, Dr. Shatanawi said the meeting provided a forum for an exchange of ideas and proposals on dealing with underground water issues which are of concern to the whole Arab World.

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Regional seminar urges Arabs to execute pilot project of artificial recharge of aquifers

MAN (J.T.) — A two day regional seminar on the artificial recharge of aquifers, held at the University of Jordan, has urged states to execute a pilot project of artificial recharge of aquifers to serve as a model also to offer basic information for the whole Arab world in the future years.

The seminar was organised by the University of Jordan and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, with participants representing 11 countries in addition to Jordan and the United States.

The seminar reviewed modern technology employed in

recharging aquifers, the experiments of a number of nations in this regard and ideas about the use of treated water in recharging underground water.

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German deputies end visit, leave for W. Bank

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A two-member team from the German federal parliament left Amman Friday morning for the occupied Arab territories on the second leg of their current tour of the Middle East region.

Professor Winfried Pinger and Mrs. Erika Reinhardt, both of the Christian Democratic Union, discussed with Jordanian parliament members and officials a range of subjects of concern to Germany and Jordan.

The peace process and the European countries' economic and political contributions to its success were among the topics discussed at a meeting with a group of parliament members representing most

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent condoles Bani Hassan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Friday delegated Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ed Zeid to attend the funeral of late Sheikh Youssef Al Zaben, a former Royal Court employee, and to convey his condolences to the family.

MC to expand agricultural exports

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC) is planning to export experimental shipments of fresh fruit and vegetables to South East Asia, the Gulf countries, eastern and western Europe and to newly-independent states, according to the AMC's Director-General Salem Al Lawzi.

Dr. Lawzi called on exporters to cooperate with the corporation to ensure the success of this trial shipment. In a related development, the corporation exported 7,637 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables to the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Qatar during the period from Dec. 4 through 10.

Today is Arab Police Day

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Saturday joins other Arab countries in celebrating the Arab Police Day. A major celebration will be held at the Public Security Department (PSD), during which the PSD director, Lieutenant-General Abdul Rahman Al Adwan, will decorate a number of public security officers and soldiers, who took part in the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Croatia, with Royal medals. Lt.-Gen. Adwan will also honour retired police officers and other PSD soldiers for their distinguished services.

Conference on sports to be held Sunday

AMMAN (Petra) — Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, a national conference on the development of sports movement in Jordan will be held Sunday at the Royal Cultural Centre. The one-day conference will discuss means of developing youth and sports activities and ways of overcoming problems facing the sports movement.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Art exhibition by artists Ibrahim Al Abdullahi and Abdul Hussein Twaij at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ali Al Sabounji at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by a number of Jordanian artists entitled "The Sixth Exhibition — Samples From The Contemporary Jordanian Art 93" at the Spanish Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists Khaled Hijazi, Mohammad Al Ameri, and Adnan Al Sharif at Phoenix Gallery for Art and Culture (Tel. 695291).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Hani Al Hourani entitled "Impressions from Wadi Al Waslah" at Baladna Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by Iraqi artist Salam Jamil at Alia Art Gallery.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Samia Zarou at the Open Studio "Al Mawana Al Maftah," Jabal Amman, 2nd Circle (9:00-13:00 and 15:00-17:00 all days except Fridays).
- ★ Exhibition "Prints and Drawings of Fahred-

- nissa Zeid" (1915-1991) until the 15th of January '94 at Darat al Fann of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "Permanent" Exhibition. (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by a number of Iraqi artists at La Casa Art Gallery (between the 5th and 6th Circles).
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by artist Khalid Khreis at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Lecture in Spanish on "Arab Calligraphy and Its Functions" by Dr. Khaled Khreis at the Spanish Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Christmas bazaar at Al Nukhlah Exhibition Hall, University Road (Tel. 837304, 684257).
- ★ Poetry recital by Lebanese poet Joseph Harb at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Prisma-Kulturmagazin in German at Goethe-Institut at 8:00 p.m.
- ★ Classical music concert at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Ordinary Issue No. 23

Drawing of December 17, 1993

Winning Tickets

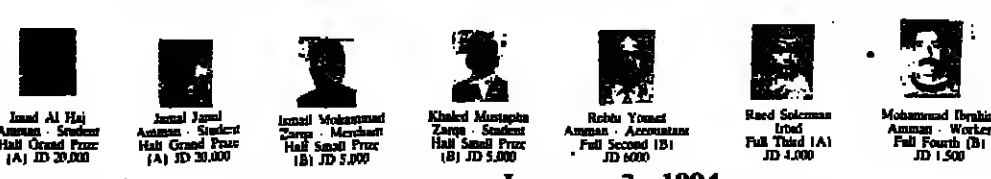
Holder of ticket No. 55583 A Wins JD 40,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 4,000 each wins JD 400 55584 55593 55683 56583 05583 55582 55573 55483 54583 45583
Holder of ticket No. 55583 B Wins JD 10,000	Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,500 each wins JD 150 55584 55593 55683 56583 05583 55582 55573 55483 54583 45583
Holder of ticket No. 26361 A B Wins JD 6,000	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 2,000 each wins JD 100 26362 26371 26461 27361 36361 26360 26351 26261 25361 16361
Holder of ticket No. 21792 A B Wins JD 4,000	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,400 each wins JD 70 21793 21702 21892 22792 31792 21791 21782 21692 20792 11792
Holder of ticket No. 36178 A B Wins JD 3,000	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 1,000 each wins JD 50 36179 36188 36278 37178 46178 36177 36168 36078 35178 26178
Holder of ticket No. 47059 A B Wins JD 2,500	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 900 each wins JD 45 47050 47069 47159 48059 57059 47058 47049 47959 46059 37059
Holder of ticket No. 15608 A B Wins JD 1,500	Twenty consolation prizes totalling JD 600 each wins JD 30 15609 15618 15708 16608 25608 15607 15698 15508 16608 05608
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Russia after the elections

WITH THE official results of last week's national elections in Russia putting the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) effectively ahead of all the other major political parties, including Russia's Choice Party which supports President Boris Yeltsin, there is every sign that the political landscape of the country is anything but settled. The LDP under the volatile leadership of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy apparently aims to restore the old might of former Soviet Union but under the old-new slogan of imperial Russia. Suffice it to recall that Mr. Zhirinovskiy views the U.S. as an evil empire that Moscow must contain and guard against with nuclear weapons. He is also known to have expressed some anti-Semitic ideas including hostile remarks about Israel. Yet the leader of the LDP remains an enigmatic personality given the fact that he is reputed to be a Jew and once a leader of a Jewish Cultural Organisation called "Shalom." Even though Zhirinovskiy spoke against Zionism as such, he nevertheless was quoted as having once described the Zionist state as a "geopolitical ally of Russia."

Perhaps this is not the real issue. Whether he is pro-Israel or even pro-Iraq as he has also been quoted as professing recently, the real concern is about the sentiments of the rank and file Russians who voted for him and supported his political platform. On this score, it is quite clear that the LDP will use its 70 seats in the 450-member Duma, the Lower House of the Russian parliament, to consolidate its gains and push for the realisation of its ultra nationalist goals and aspirations. Given the defeatist mood of the country in the wake of the collapse of the once mighty Soviet Union, there will always be a yearning in Russia for the resurrection of their superpower status.

In a way the present versatile political climate in Russia is fertile for the rebirth of ultra nationalist currents. When the proven popular and parliamentary strength of raw nationalism in Moscow is added to the political gains of the equally disgruntled Communists and their Agrarian Party allies, then the political fortunes of President Yeltsin and his Russia's Choice supporters are simply in doubt, to say the least. The Communists under Mikhail Gorbachev have captured almost 14 per cent of the vote as compared with 14.5 per cent for the Yeltsin forces. These results do not bode well for the incumbent Russian leader or for the new world order that Moscow has supported.

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that the traditional rivalries between Washington and Moscow may resurface again as the mainstay of the most recent world order yet. With more and more Russians supporting the resurgence of Russia's nuclear capability and its possible deployment to beef up its territorial and political ambitions, there is little doubt that the international community is in for new surprises that could also be destabilising.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THERE IS no doubt that the current acts of violence and the murder of innocent foreign civilians in Algeria are bound to damage Islam's image before the world, said Al Dostour daily. It is indeed sad and tragic to see the Algerian people sliding towards an abyss of civil war blindfolded and unable to feel their way around, said the daily in its comment on the killing of the 12 foreigners in Algiers two days ago. The killings stir not only regret over the death of the innocent people but also fear and apprehension over the future of this country which might for many years in order to secure independence, continued the paper. It is not for us to point fingers to the perpetrator of these acts of violence or say whether the fundamentalists or others are responsible; one can only express disgust and condemnation, the paper went on. The foreign people killed in cold blood have been visitors and guests of the people of Algeria whose duty was to provide protection and hospitality rather than behave like murderers, it added. It is not only the image of Muslims in Algeria that is being marred, it is that of Islam world-wide, the paper pointed out. It said that it is time for the conflicting forces in Algeria to resort to reason and to abstain from any acts of violence so as to ensure stability and security. The paper said that whatever the reason given for such acts, they can by no means be justified under any law or norm.

TAHER AL Udwan, a columnist in Al Dostour, described the return of the Palestinians deported to Marj Al Zuhur as a success for international law and the intifada which caused their expulsion in the first place. The continuation of the Palestinian uprising and the steadfastness of the expellees, together with pressure exerted on Israel by various sources, have finally brought about the return, said the writer. The eyes of the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular will now watch to see the impact of this return on the intifada, especially on the behaviour of Hamas which has shown total defiance to the Israelis and has objected to the PLO-Israeli deal on autonomy in Palestine, said the writer.

Jordanian Perspective

Without Arab backing, Palestinians stand little chance to get Israeli concessions

By Dr. Musa Keilani

THE DELAY in the partial Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and Jericho under the Sept. 13 accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has come as no surprise. If anything, the apparent deadlock in the implementation of the autonomy accord has given the parties involved in the peace process a moment of respite from the hectic pace Arab-Israeli peacemaking picked up after that fateful day in September when old enemies turned a new leaf of the lawns of the White House.

For one thing, the stated Israeli positions in the negotiations on an implementation agreement of the autonomy accord reveal very clearly that the priorities of the Jewish state: have very well been laid out. That cannot be said for the Palestinian side since it is clear that the approach of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is to get as many tokens of Palestinian independence as possible in the bargain without knowing very clearly how much the Israelis are willing to give.

If published accounts of the meeting and exchanges between Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Cairo on Dec. 12 are accurate to any acceptable degree, then it is also clear that it was no negotiations that went on between the two. It was more a one-sided conversation where Arafat went on making his demands and Rabin went on saying no without even making any pretense of engaging the PLO leader in any kind of bargaining.

No wonder Arafat looked crestfallen when he came out of that meeting with little to show; in fact Rabin had no intention of giving anything away — "I want this," and "no you won't get it" summed up the exchange between Arafat and Rabin. Now, I, for one, do not consider that as negotiations. The term that fits is "dictating."

(That reminds me to appeal to Arafat not to insult the people he represents by his futile gesture to shake Rabin's hands; it is demeaning and degrading to see the president turned down by the Israeli prime minister, who has made no secret of his distaste for Arafat, who, whether anyone likes it or not, happens to be the head of the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.)

"I know that this was what you were willing to offer then I would not have accepted the Oslo agreement," Arafat was quoted as telling Rabin during the Dec. 12 meeting.

Now, that was a very telling statement. On the one hand, it goes without saying that Arafat, in his haste to enter some accord with Israel to legitimise the PLO's role in the peace process and to ensure political survival, overlooked a lot of crucial factors when he agreed to the vaguely defined Oslo accord that was formalised in Washington on Sept. 13.

Obviously, it was also a case of brinkmanship, where the

PLO chairman hoped that things would fall into place once actual negotiations on the modalities of autonomy got going.

But what Arafat and his associates who negotiated the Oslo agreement might not have taken into serious consideration was the fact that Israel knew very well what and how much it was willing and would be willing to offer the Palestinians in the interim period. It might even be true for the "final status" negotiations in three years from now.

Having said that, it cannot be said that Arafat and his people were in any better shape to ensure that Israel agreed to their bottom lines in the Oslo agreement since it was a case of the strong armed with all aces piled against the weak trying to bluff.

But that does not change anything. The Palestinian people have struggled and waited for decades for some sign of an end to their suffering under the yoke of occupation, and what faces them today is uncertainty at best.

The surge in violence and the diminishing support for autonomy among the Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as those in the diaspora cannot but be attributed to an emerging understanding of the clear lines that Israel has drawn for interim self-rule.

It is very clear from the public statements and actions as well as negotiating posture of the Israelis that they have no intention of going any further than those lines.

Given the balance of power in the region and the dynamics of international politics in the wake of the end of the cold war, there is almost nothing that Arafat could do to push the Israelis. But that does not mean that he should stop trying. After all, he represents the aspirations of the world's six million Palestinians, and he cannot afford to let them down.

The PLO chairman's pointed reference that the Sept. 13 accord was not simply an Israel-PLO accord but an international document guaranteed by the United States and Russia is the best indicator that he is desperately groping for intervention from the co-sponsors at an immediate point.

It is doubtful whether Washington would move in the direction that Arafat wants it to: and the less said about Russia the better in the context of its influence (or the lack of it) in the peace process.

So where does that leave the Palestinians?

Needless to say, unless armed with stronger Arab backing stemming from a firm conviction that the make or break point has come in Middle East peacemaking, the Palestinians have little option other than accepting what Israel is willing to offer them.

But again, if what happened in last week's meeting in Tokyo of the multilateral steering group is any indication, then such a strong Arab backing may not be forthcoming.

Regardless of whatever pressure was applied, from whatever quarters, the Arabs should not have accepted to host the next meetings of four of the five multilateral working group in Arab countries.

The net impact of the Tokyo decision to have Oman, Qatar and Morocco host three of the working groups is clear: A further foothold for Israel in its quest for normalisation of relations with the Arab World without actually giving the Palestinians anything substantial (Cairo's hosting of the next round of talks on refugees is not relevant since Egypt is off-screen in the context of normalised relations).

Jordan, for whom the continued Arab boycott of Israel and normalisation of relations are the best bets to demand the Jewish state meet Arab demands, resisted the pressure to have the working group on the environment meet in Jordanian territory, and thus Poland was given that "honour."

All said and done, it was indeed regrettable that the course of events took such a course in Tokyo at a time a strong message was needed from the Arabs to Israel that its goal of acceptance as a member of the Middle Eastern family depended largely on its meeting the aspirations of the Palestinian people and accepting the inevitability of returning Arab lands to their rightful owners.

Instead, the message that Israel got out of Tokyo was perhaps an indirect encouragement that very few Arabs are going to bother with the Israel-PLO negotiations and the pressure that the PLO is finding itself under to accept what the Jewish state is willing to offer.

Arafat has deprived himself of any strong card that could have helped him by going it alone with the Israelis without consulting any of the Arab countries. Least of all Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, the three other partners of the PLO in the peace process.

But then to say that it is the PLO's funeral and deny the organisation the rightful support it deserves at a critical time was nothing but shirking responsibilities.

However, the ball is squarely in Arafat's court despite what has happened (or has not happened) in the implementation of the autonomy accord. The PLO chairman still has enough manoeuvring room with his Arab friends, including Syria, to enlist help. But then, what he needs to do first is to abandon his decades-old policy of playing his cards too close to his chest and not only pledge to work closely but also to remain committed to the pledge.

Given Arafat's political track record, this may perhaps be too much to expect, but then it is time the PLO chairman mended his ways in a spirit of total cooperation and understanding with his partners in the peace process.

The Week in Print

PLO-Israeli deal:

The die is cast: Back to square one

Reviewed by
Elia Nasrallah

FAILURE to implement the Palestine-Israeli deal, Jordanian-Palestinian coordination efforts and domestic issues dominated the articles in the local press in the past week.

Writing in Al Rai daily, columnist Mohammad Rimawi said that failure to implement the Palestine-Israeli deal was better than implementation of a deal which does not live up to the aspirations of the Palestinians. Difference in the interpretation of the provisions of the deal by Israel and the Palestinians has led to the deadlock and the delay that could extend for many months, he said.

Therefore, said the writer, failure to implement the deal is better than implementing it in a manner that would serve the interests of Israel alone.

According to Salameh Ekour, a writer in Sawt Al Shaab daily, the lack of implementation of the deal means that the Israelis harbour ill intentions and the fate of the Jewish settlements is still not clear in accordance with the provisions of the Oslo agreement.

The coming Rabin-Arafat meeting in Cairo could result in further delays or other meetings, and so on, without any tangible results benefiting the Palestinian cause, said the writer.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said that the present escalation of violence on the part of the Jewish settlers was bound to abort the PLO-Israeli deal. It said that it would be most advisable for the PLO leadership to try to expose the Israeli position in the whole world and to insist that the deal be carried out to the letter and in the spirit of the provisions of the agreement, said the paper.

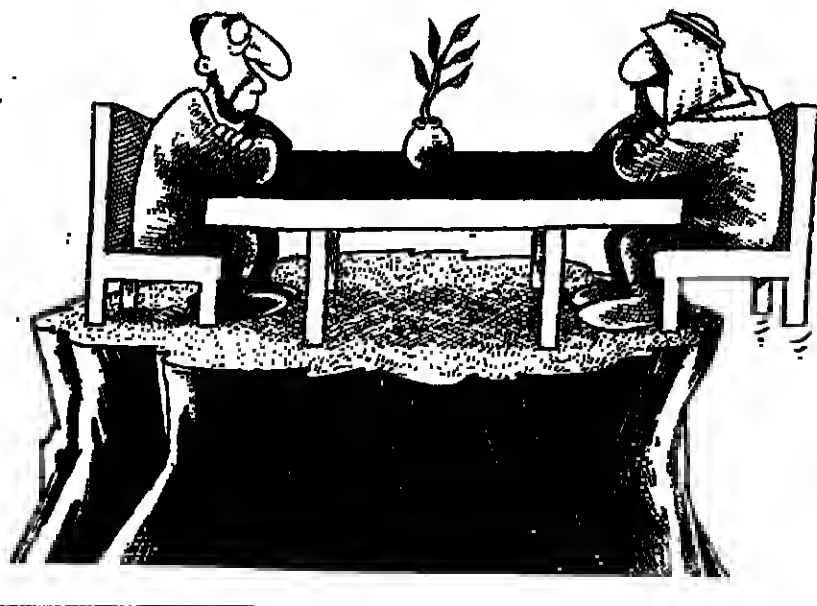
Tareq Masarweh, a columnist in Al Rai, said that the Arabs had their doubts not only about the PLO-Israeli deal but also about the whole peace process held under the auspices of the United States.

The writer said that the Gulf war and the peace process were only part of a U.S.-Israeli military and political onslaught on the whole Arab World to subdue the Arabs and end their resistance to Israeli occupation.

He said that after imposing its military hegemony on the Arabs, Washington initiated the negotiations whose result: would of course fail to achieve Arab rights.

With the delay in the implementation of the PLO-

M. KAHIL



Israel agreement, said Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dostour, the whole process is back to square one. Indeed, Israel's postponement of the execution of the "Jericho-Gaza first" deal brought more desperation to the Arab people and caused the whole peace process to enter into a dark tunnel again, said the writer.

By disclosing that the PLO-Israeli crisis was serious, Mr. Rabin has given an indication that the deal would not be implemented soon and could be frozen forever, added the writer.

What could happen in 10 days' time to make the Israelis or the Palestinians change their position and or cause their deal to be implemented? asked Saleh Al Qallab, a columnist in Al Dostour.

The writer said that 10 days are not sufficient for Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat to come up with alternative solutions to the crisis which stemmed from Israel's failure to implement the Oslo agreement.

He said that as long as Mr. Arafat and Mr. Rabin are still adhering to their positions, there could be no chance for the implementation of the agreement.

Sultan Al Hattab, a columnist in Al Rai, blamed the failure to implement the Oslo deal on the United States' indifference and neutrality and also on the new spiral of violence prevailing in the occupied Arab territories.

Lack of implementation of

this agreement, said the writer, could cause the whole region to retreat into a cycle of violence and create explosive situations for the Arabs and the Israelis alike.

What is needed, said Hattab, is for Washington to force the Israelis to withdraw their forces from the Gaza Strip and Jericho areas so as to give credibility to the leadership of Mr. Arafat who had signed the deal.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily commented on the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination efforts by saying that despite the pressure exercised on Mr. Arafat to deal economically and politically with Israel, the coordination with Jordan should never stop or wane.

The Jordanians and the Palestinians have lived through a successful experiment of national unity since 1948 and this unity should not be sacrificed by groups which are indifferent to Arab unity, said Arafat Hijazi.

The writer said that the coordination with Jordan should be by no means stop or be sacrificed for the sake of ensuring normal ties with Israel for the simple reason that no one can accept that the rights of two million Jordanians of Palestinian origin be endangered or their unity with the Jordanian people be tampered with.

Nazih Qousous focused attention on the Civil Service Consumer Corporation workers by calling attention to the fact that government employees more often than not fail to find their necessary

needs in them.

The columnist, who wrote for Sawt Al Shaab daily, said that the corporation markets, which were established to serve these employees, ought to buy the items which are on great demand and sell at prices less than that of similar items in the local markets. He said that the corporation ought to help reduce the burdens on the employees not increase them.

Ahmad Dabbas, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab daily, discussed unemployment in Jordan, demanding that a Labour Ministry law, on the employment of foreign workers, be enforced.

The writer said that despite the clear regulations about the employment of guest workers, one can easily discover violations and excesses. It is regrettable that these violations of rules are exacerbating the unemployment situation in the country. Mohammad Daoud, a columnist in Al Dostour, criticised the concerned authorities for failing to deal drastically with issues pertaining to the firms that are failing to make progress.

Faltering companies should be dealt with promptly and without delay so that what is remaining of their capital can be saved and their debts paid before it is too late, demanded the writer. It is really sad, he said, to see the government failing to take a decision in this vital matter although officials realise that some of these companies can never achieve any progress at all.

Italy 1993: Clean hands, dirty linen — a fresh start?

By Jean-Louis de la Vaisiere

Agence France Presse

ROME — Italy 1993 will be remembered as the year the country decided to clean its dirty washing in public, only to find the stench almost too much to bear.

The clean hands corruption probe had begun modestly in Milan. But as the year wore on, it became increasingly clear that the class that has governed Italy for 50 years was rotten almost to the very core.

Then, in the dying months of a year that saw the establishment rocked to its very foundations, Italy began to show signs that it might, just, be able to start afresh.

Politicians were the main victims. By December, the ruling Christian Democrats were alleged to have received billions of lire in illegal payments from industrialists and other contributors.

The party's performance in municipal elections this month reflected this: It collapsed to its worst showing in decades, with barely 12 per cent support, as the neo-fascists moved in to power in Rome and in the south.

Its Socialist coalition partners were also badly hit. Early in the year, in January, Socialist leader Bettino Craxi resigned after 17 years in office. By the end of the year, the party had all but disappeared as a political force.

In one of the more stunning developments, his old political foe and seven-time Italian prime minister, Giulio Andreotti, 74, also came under investigation for alleged collusion with the Mafia in two mob assassinations.

In all, by the end of the year, some 25 per cent of Italy's 956 deputies and senators were under investigation. But it was not only politicians who fell under the judges' spotlight. Not by a long way.

On the industrial front, the biggest scandal over the past 12 months was undoubtedly that involving Enimont, the failed joint venture between state energy giant ENI and the Ferruzzi-Montedison group.

The investigations centred on allegations that 150 billion lire (nearly \$100 million) had been donated illicitly to political parties as part of a share deal.

But a number of household names were also drawn into the seemingly endlessly growing list of groups and individuals under investigation: carmaker Fiat was one. Olivetti boss Carlo de Benedetti

was another who admitted passing bribes.

Dozens of other business leaders also saw the inside of the San Vittore prison in Milan, during the year, sent there by aptly-named clean hands judge Antonio Di Pietro, whose work has rocked the political establishment.

Inevitably, with new names being drawn into the corruption scandal almost daily, Italy's political situation remained unstable during the year.

Following the resignation of Socialist Prime Minister Giuliano Amato, technocrat Carlo Azeglio Ciampi took office in April.

Along with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, observers hoped the presence of the former Bank of Italy governor would stabilise the political scene.

But by the end of the year even the apparently untouchable head of state was being dragged down into the allegations, with accusations that he had received sums of cash in a deal involving the Italian secret services.

One of the few encouraging signs for Italy in 1993 was the apparent weakening of the Mafia's grip, starting with the arrest in January of its alleged leader, Salvatore Totò Riina, after 23 years on the run.

During the year, a number of extremist attacks — notably in Rome, Milan and in the centre of historic Florence, destroying part of the world-famous Uffizi gallery — kept police on their toes.

But by the end of the year a number of Mafia turncoats helped investigators stage further high-profile clampdowns on the Sicilian gangs, leading many to believe that their era was finally waning.

As Italy looks forward to 1994, the signs are good — or at least, not as bleak as a year ago. But cynics will inevitably warn that just because it has been through some bad times, good times are not necessarily ahead.

The Mafia may well be on the wane. The political earthquake that this month's municipal elections represented may finally be leading the way to a new political era in national elections due in the spring.

But many still question, after a year of unprecedented revelations about how the mechanics of power in Italy work, just how long it will take for the country fully to cleanse itself.

محلى من اقول

Anti-Soviet warrior puts his army on the road to peace

By Robert Fisk

Osama Bin Laden sat in his gold-fringed robe, guarded by the loyal Arab mujahedeen who fought alongside him in Afghanistan. Bearded, taciturn figures — unarmed, but never more than a few yards from the man who recruited them, trained them and then dispatched them to destroy the Soviet army — they watched unsmiling as the Sudanese villagers of Almatig lined up to thank the Saudi businessman who is about to complete the highway linking their homes to Khartoum for the first time in history.

With his high cheekbones, narrow eyes and long brown robe, Mr. Bin Laden looks every inch the mountain warrior of mujahedeen legend. Chador children danced in front of him, preachers acknowledged his wisdom. "We have been waiting for this road through all the revolutions in Sudan," a sheikh said. "We waited until we had given up on everybody — and then Osama Bin Laden came along."

Outside Sudan, Mr. Bin Laden is not regarded with quite such high esteem. The

Egyptian press claims he brought hundreds of former Arab fighters back to Sudan from Afghanistan, while the Western embassy circuit in Khartoum has suggested that some of the "Afghans" whom this Saudi entrepreneur flew to Sudan are now busy training for further jihad wars in Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt. Mr. Bin Laden is well aware of this. "The rubbish of the media and the embassies," he calls it. "I am a construction engineer and an agriculturalist. If I had training camps here in Sudan, I couldn't possibly do this job."

And "this job" is certainly an ambitious one: a brand-new highway stretching all the way from Khartoum to Port Sudan, a distance of 1,200 kilometres (745 miles) on the old road, now shortened to 800 kilometres by the new Bin Laden route that will turn the coastal run from the capital into a mere day's journey. Into a country that is despised by Saudi Arabia for its support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war almost as much as it is condemned by the United States. Mr. Bin Laden has brought the very construction equipment that he used only five years ago to

build the guerrilla trails of Afghanistan.

He is a shy man. Maintaining a home in Khartoum and only a small apartment in his home city of Jeddah, he is married — with four wives — but wary of the press. His interview with the Independent was the first he has ever given to a Western journalist, and he initially refused to talk about Afghanistan, sitting silently on a chair at the back of a makeshift tent, brushing his teeth in the Arab fashion with a stick of miswak wood. But talk he eventually did about a war which he helped to win for the Afghan mujahedeen: "What I lived in two years there, I could not have lived in a hundred years elsewhere," he said.

When the history of the Afghan resistance movement is written, Mr. Bin Laden's own contribution to the mujahedeen — and the indirect result of his training and assistance — may turn out to be a turning-point in the recent history of militant fundamentalism; even if, today, he tries to minimise

his role. "When the invasion of Afghanistan started, I was enraged and went there at once — I arrived within days, before the end of 1979," he said. "Yes, I fought there, but my fellow Muslims did much more than I. Many of them died and I am still alive."

Within months, however, Mr. Bin Laden was sending Arab fighters — Egyptians, Algerians, Lebanese, Kuwaitis, Turks and Tunisians — into Afghanistan: "not hundreds but thousands," he said. He supported them with weapons and his own construction equipment. Along with his Iraqi engineer, Mohammad Saad — who is now building the Port Sudan road — Mr. Bin Laden blasted massive tunnels into the Zazi mountains of Bakhtiar province for guerrilla hospitals and arms dumps, then cut a mujahedeen trail across the country to within 15 miles of Kabul.

"No, I was never afraid of death. As Muslims, we believe that when we die, we go to heaven. Before a battle, God sends us *sejins*, tranquility."

"Once I was only 30 metres from the Russians and they were trying to capture me. I was under bombardment but I was so peaceful in my heart that I fell asleep. This experience has been written about in our earliest books. I saw a 120mm mortar shell land in front of me, but it did not blow up. Four more bombs were dropped from a Russian plane on our headquarters but they did not explode. We beat the Soviet Union. The Russians fled."

But what of the Arab mujahedeen whom he took to Afghanistan — members of a guerrilla army who were also encouraged and armed by the United States — and who were forgotten when that war was over? "Personally neither I nor my brothers saw evidence of American help. When my mujahedeen were victorious and the Russians were driven out, differences started (between the guerrilla movements) so I returned to road construction in Taif and Ahha. I brought back the equipment I had used to build tunnels and roads for

the mujahedeen in Afghanistan. Yes, I helped some of my comrades to come here to Sudan after the war."

How many? Osama Bin Laden shakes his head. "I don't want to say. But they are here now with me. They are working right here, building this road to Port Sudan." I told him that Bosnian Muslim fighters in the Bosnian town of Travnik had mentioned his name to me. "I feel the same about Bosnia," he said. "But the situation there does not provide the same opportunities as Afghanistan. A small number of mujahedeen have gone to fight in Bosnia-Herzegovina but the Croats won't allow the mujahedeen in through Croatia as the Pakistanis did with Afghanistan."

Thus did Mr. Bin Laden reflect upon jihad while his former fellow combatants looked on. Was it not a little bit anti-climatic for them, I asked, to fight the Russians and end up road-building in Sudan? "They like this work and so do I. This is a great plan which we are achieving for the people here, it helps the Muslims and improves their lives."

His Bin Laden company — not to be confused with the larger construction business run by his cousins — is paid in Sudanese currency which is then used to purchase sesame and other products for export; profits are clearly not Mr. Bin Laden's top priority.

How did he feel about Algeria, I asked? But a man in a green suit calling himself Mohammad Moussa — he claimed to be Nigerian although he was a Sudanese

security officer — tapped me on the arm. "You have asked more than enough questions," he said. At which Mr. Bin Laden went off to inspect his new road — The Independent.



Osama Bin Laden

Lonely scientists lie in wait for nippy neutrinos

By Roger Crabb
Reuter

KAMIOKA, Japan — Deep beneath the densely wooded mountainside where local sportsmen hunt pheasants, a small group of scientists chase after even more elusive prey — a tiny visitor from outer space called the neutrino.

Study of these subatomic particles, spat out from the nuclear cauldron at the heart of the sun and other stars, could help researchers unravel fundamental secrets of the universe.

Slightly less esoterically, it could reveal any waning of the sun's strength, a phenomenon which over aeons could spell the end of life on Earth.

Some physicists estimate the sun bombards the average person with 100 trillion neutrinos per second. The problem is tracking them down.

They move at the speed of light, yet their passage is habitually masked by the presence of cosmic rays and other highly reactive particles.

At the bottom of a zinc mine in central Japan lies Professor Yoji Totsuka's answer to the riddle — a tank lined with photosensors and filled with 3,000 tonnes of water.

"Neutrinos easily penetrate the Earth, even at night they come through from the other side, with very little interaction," Prof. Totsuka said during a recent tour of the Kamiokande facility 1,000 metres underground.

"We need a lot of material between us and the sky," he said. "For us, the cosmic rays are just a nuisance."

From their dark, damp observatory in the bowels of the earth, a team of experts keep a 24-hour "watch" on the sun.

"The U.S. and Russia are also doing neutrinos research but we're the biggest," said Prof. Totsuka, of Tokyo University's Cosmic Rays Research Institute.

"Still we catch only one particle every three days or so," he added.

"The neutrino reacts with the very, very pure water in the tank. When it hits the water, there's a very weak blue light which the very highly sensitive photosensors pick up... of course, radon gas can give a fake neutrino effect."

It is all very frustrating. Prof. Totsuka now impatiently awaits completion of a new "super Kamiokande", a much larger detector which he estimates should snare about 30 "Neutrinos a day."

That 8.7 billion yen (\$81 million) government project, incorporating a tank with 11,200 photosensors and 50,000 tonnes of water, is under construction in a nearby cavern.

The tank will stand about 42 metres high with a diameter of 39 metres. The contractors,

mine owners Mitsui Mining and Smelting, say that when it goes into operation in 1996 it will be the world's biggest underground scientific facility.

Already, Prof. Totsuka's team have had one signal triumph. In 1987, working with U.S. scientists, they detected 11 neutrinos from the explosion of a supernova in the large Magellanic cloud, 160,000 light years from Earth.

It was the first time neutrinos had been detected on Earth from outside the Milky Way.

"We can establish directionality, so we can determine if neutrinos come from the sun or elsewhere," Prof. Totsuka said. "For the supernova, for example, we detected a sudden, distinctive 10-second burst of energy."

What relevance has the project to people on Earth?

Prof. Totsuka, a pure scientist, holds out no promise of early spinoffs for the urban consumer. But he believes his work helps man better understand the universe, not least the continuing viability of the star on which life on Earth depends.

"It will give us detailed knowledge of the sun," he says. "Neutrinos are produced by nuclear reaction. By gauging the amount of energy and working backwards, we can establish whether or not the sun is gradually losing its strength."

Tracing neutrinos from a supernova the size of the one detected in 1987 would go along way toward helping scientists understand what happens when a star breaks up, he goes on.

The Kamiokande team also hopes to answer a key question in elementary physics — do protons decay and, if so, when?

Until the late 1970s, scientists believed that protons — fundamental particles present in the nuclei of all atoms — never decayed. But proponents of a grand unifying theory of the universe now argue that protons over aeons must degenerate into smaller elementary particles.

Kamiokande has already shown that protons do not decay within a period of 10 to the power of 32 years. Now, says Prof. Totsuka, the advanced detector will try to determine whether protons decay within a period of 10 to the power of 24 years.

Should a proton in a water molecule decay, it would emit flashes of light which would go in two opposite directions through the tank water and be picked up by photo multipliers.

In hopes of witnessing just such esoteric, yet fundamental, phenomena, one of Prof. Totsuka's staff takes the rickety tramway into the mine each day to keep vigil in the twilight beside the gigantic water tank.

It's a lonely job hut. The Kamiokande team believes, someone has to do it.

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Saudi cash problems seen unlikely to create unrest

DUBAI (R) — Low oil prices are aggravating Saudi Arabia's immediate cash-flow problem but bankers and diplomats doubt the economic damage will lead to civil unrest.

On Monday the Washington Post said that as oil prices fall to five-year lows, some analysts expect ordinary Saudis to grow restive if they start to lose their old benefits and subsidies.

But the bankers and diplomats largely dismissed this prediction.

"This is not an earthquake or a collapse of the market. It is a tighter situation, which the Saudis have to deal with," said a Western economic attaché based in Riyadh.

"That is exaggerated... I would take the view that this is not a crisis, it is a difficult situation," added the diplomat.

Another Western diplomat based in Saudi Arabia said: "I do not see that (unrest) at all." "Saudi Arabia might have to tighten its belt now but in the long term they have what the

world needs, oil, and a lot of it too," a senior Arab banker in the region said.

Saudi officials say the ingredients for unrest do not exist in the kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter and producer.

When the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed on a production accord in September, the six-oil rich Gulf Arab states were hoping for higher revenues to finance persistent budget deficits.

But world prices are now below those budgeted in all six states and experts say their collective 1993 budget deficits could exceed the projected \$13.8 billion.

The kingdom, which now pumps eight million barrels of oil per day (b/d), has been running budget deficits since the mid-1980s. Revenue from oil has dropped in the past few weeks as prices have fallen to \$13 a barrel, \$4 below the price used to calculate 1993 earnings.

Saudi Arabia's oil revenue

has shrunk to just around \$3 billion a month from \$3.5 billion earlier this year and bankers and diplomats in the region are looking to see if Riyadh will cut spending and subsidies in the 1994 budget, which is due in early January.

Officials argue that the standard of living in Saudi Arabia is as high as in western Europe, high enough to spare Saudis much of the discomfort a harsh recession might create elsewhere.

"Washington has the general view that the Saudi economy is sound. Every economy has its momentary ups and downs," added one Western diplomat.

During the two years of the Gulf crisis, Riyadh spent \$127 billion while earnings were put at \$84.4 billion. The 1993 budget put the deficit at \$7.4 billion and expenditure at \$52.5 billion. A third of spending goes on defence and security.

The Washington Post said analysts worry lower revenue might lead Riyadh to cancel some of its orders for military

hardware.

But Saudi officials and military experts say Riyadh is able to honour its arms deals.

"Saudi Arabia has always abided strictly to all its financial commitments," said one.

It has never been late on covering the local bond market, and on loan servicing or missed one payment on its American military purchases, they said.

Riyadh, which up till now

has paid for American arms, has deals with Washington in the pipeline worth \$35 billion, mainly for Abram M1A2 tanks, Patriot launchers and missiles and 72 F-15 jet fighters, bringing the total ordered so far to 150.

Experts say Saudi Arabia can make these payments, probably at a rate of between \$4 to \$5 billion a year.

Riyadh also has a contract with Britain for 48 Tornados.

This could be worth \$10 billion and requires \$3 billion a year.

In recent months, several American and British newspapers have cast doubts on the health of the Saudi economy.

But Finance Minister Mohammad Abul Khail has stressed that there is no cause for concern.

IBM Europe to shed 10,000 jobs

PARIS (R) — International Business Machines Corp needs to shed at least another 10,000 jobs in its Europe/Middle East/Africa unit, Hans-Olaf Hankel, incoming chairman of IBM Europe, said Friday.

"Overall I think we have to take it down another 10,000. I would say that's a minimum number we are aiming to achieve," he said.

He had been asked about employment in IBM Europe

over the next two years. The IBM subsidiary has already cut jobs from 110,000 at the beginning of 1991 to 77,000 at the end of this year.

Mr. Henkel said IBM would probably have to lay off workers as part of its job cuts. "Depending on the environment (in different countries) we will have to make use also of involuntary separation," he said.

He said IBM Germany

would bear the brunt of job losses as it was IBM's largest subsidiary in Europe. IBM Germany would employ about 16,000 people by the end of 1995, down from 21,000 currently employed.

He declined to be more precise on job cuts planned for IBM Europe's other subsidiaries.

He said he wanted to get the restructuring over with as quickly as possible.

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WEEKLY REPORT
UNADJUSTED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/12/1993 - 12/12/1993)

COUNTRY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	DIFFERENCE
ASIA BANK	1,154,845	185,000	186,000	185,000	-1,000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	141,531	5,380	5,380	5,380	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,488	4,350	4,350	4,350	0
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	435,125	5,550	5,550	5,550	0
THE JORDANIAN BANK	176,873	5,570	5,570	5,570	0
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	364,947	3,810	3,810	3,810	0
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	364,947	1,740	1,740	1,740	0
ASIA JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	5,447	4,350	4,350	4,350	0
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	70,481	5,850	5,850	5,850	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,555	4,800	4,800	4,800	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	124,161	4,350	4,350	4,350	0
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	62,640	4,400	4,400	4,400	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,488	1,840	1,840	1,840	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,375	1,850	1,850	1,850	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	619,070	3,380	3,380	3,380	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	7,700	3,350	3,350	3,350	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	87,000	2,500	2,500	2,500	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	324	3,100	3,100	3,100	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	116,168	7,110	7,110	7,110	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	181,475	2,470	2,470	2,470	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,473	3,000	3,000	3,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	884	3,000	3,150	3,150	150
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	854,894	2,350	2,340	2,340	-10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,513	1,210	1,210	1,210	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18,434	7,350	7,350	7,350	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,420	4,750	4,750	4,750	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	35,261	1,500	1,500	1,500	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	27,467	0,850	0,810	0,810	-40
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	145,555	3,540	3,550	3,550	10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	32,146	1,440	1,450	1,450	10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,550	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,008	1,450	1,470	1,470	20
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,150	13,300	13,300	13,300	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,094,207	9,320	9,320	9,320	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	175,244	2,700	2,700	2,700	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,550	1,740	1,740	1,740	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	566,558	5,050	5,050	5,050	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,244	3,050	3,100	3,100	50
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	44,488	4,810	4,860	4,860	50
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,812	1,570	1,570	1,570	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	89,325	7,350	7,350	7,350	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,713	11,000	10,950	10,950	-50
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	47,772	8,310	8,310	8,310	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	77,554	7,150	7,150	7,150	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	82,446	3,050	3,150	3,150	100
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18,841	3,500	3,500	3,500	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	8,155	4,000	4,000	4,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	58,445	30,360	31,300	31,300	940
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	296,563	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	15,317	3,300	3,350	3,350	50
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,545	3,360	3,360	3,360	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	551,452	15,000	15,000	15,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	407,033	3,360	3,350	3,350	-10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	347,100	14,550	14,600	14,600	50
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	15,441	1,550	1,570	1,570	20
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	5,320	0,410	0,390	0,390	-20
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	52,257	5,000	5,020	5,020	20
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	85,482	1,500	1,510	1,510	10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	41,117	3,400	3,420	3,420	20
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	31,671	1,400	1,410	1,410	10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	41,030	4,300	4,300	4,300	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	35,552	1,150	1,140	1,140	-10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,444	0,370	0,370	0,370	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	10,444	1,540	1,540	1,540	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	16,314	0,100	0,100	0,100	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,444	2,000	2,000	2,000	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	220,225	3,270	3,280	3,280	10
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	15,545	1,350	1,350	1,350	0
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	15,754	3,320	3,680	3,680	360
ASIA BANK FOR INVESTMENT	844,250	0,310	0,300	0,300	-10
GRAND TOTAL	13,645,845				

PARALLEL MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (11/12/1993 - 12/12/1993)

COUNTRY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE	DIFFERENCE
CENTRAL GENERAL TRADING & STORAGE	11,075	1,030	1,040	1,040	10
JORDAN TRADING & STORAGE	181,418	0,140	0,140	0,140	0
JORDAN TRADING & STORAGE	1,040	1,000	1,000	1,000	0
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	25,571	0,800	0,810	0,810	10
JORDANIAN INVESTMENT & TRADING	5,551	1,300	1,315	1,315	15
JORDANIAN INVESTMENT & TRADING	134,870	1,400	1,410	1,410	10
NATIONAL CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES CO. LTD	56,871	2,400	2,400	2,400	0
NATIONAL TEXTILE & WEAVING CO. LTD	7,200	1,320	1,320	1,320	0
JORDANIAN TEXTILE & WEAVING CO. LTD	51,840	3,600	3,610	3,610	10
NATIONAL MULTIPLEX INDUSTRIES	56,575	2,115	2,100	2,100	-15
AL-SAYED WOOD INDUSTRIES CO.	35,557	2,780	2,800	2,800	20
GRAND TOTAL	881,154				

Financial Markets

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Interbank Interest Rates Dates: 16/12/1993

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.18	3.18	3.40	3.68
Sterling Pound	5.68	5.31	5.12	5.02
Deutsche Mark	6.31	6.00	5.62	5.23
Swiss Franc	4.28	3.93	3.81	3.56
French Franc	6.62	6.42	6.03	5.53
Japanese Yen	2.37	2.06	1.57	1.61
European Currency Unit	6.62	6.31	6.00	5.56

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Dates: 16/12/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7020	0.7040
Sterling Pound	1.0389	1.0411
Deutsche Mark	0.4085	0.4105
Swiss Franc	0.4775	0.4799
French Franc	0.1195	0.1201
Japanese Yen	0.0382	0.0414
Dutch Guilder	0.3649	0.3667
Swedish Krona	0.0414	0.0416
Italian Lira	0.0414	0.0416
Belgian Franc	0.0414	0.0416

* Per 100

Other Currencies Dates: 16/12/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
Lebanese Lira	0.040575	0.041555
Saudi Riyal	0.1855	0.1885
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2550	2.3200
Qatari Riyal	0.1902	0.1916
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2220
Omani Riyal	1.7900	1.8250
UAE Dirham	0.1902	0.1916
Greek Drachma	0.2775	0.3235
Cypriot Pound	1.3555	1.3875

* Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3334/44	Canadian dollar
	1.7076/86	Deutsche marks
	1.9128/38	Dutch guilders
	1.4594/04	Swiss francs
	35.61/65	Belgian francs
	5.8367/17	French francs
	1690.62.1	Italian lire
	109.80/90	Japanese yen
	8.4061/61	Swedish crowns
	7.4180/30	Norwegian crowns
	6.6925/75	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4875/85	
One ounce of gold	\$385.50/385.90	

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Bosnian factions agree to Christmas ceasefire

SARAJEVO (R) — Bosnian Muslim leaders met international mediators Friday ahead of a peace conference next week and commanders of all three warring factions in Bosnia had agreed on a Christmas truce, the United Nations said.

Mediators were holding a one-day meeting with Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic in Vienna to pave the way for wider peace negotiations between combatants scheduled for Dec. 21, diplomats said.

Mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg were holding bilateral talks with warring factions this week before the conference reconvened in yet another bid to end the 20-month civil war.

"The co-chairmen (Owen and Stoltenberg) will be trying to create a situation where next week's meetings have a greater chance of success," spokesman John Mills said.

Military commanders of Croat, Muslim and Serb forces had agreed to silence their guns between Dec. 23 and Jan. 3 and to grant safe passage for a private aid convoy heading for a hospital in the Croat enclave of Vitez, U.N. military spokesman Major Idesbald Van Biesebroeck said Friday.

The truce, the latest in a war that has seen many ceasefires collapse, was announced as fighting continued across Bosnia and in the besieged capital of Sarajevo.

The Muslim-led Bosnian army appeared to have pushed forward in street fighting in

central Sarajevo against Serb troops, Mr. Van Biesebroeck told reporters at a news conference.

"The first BSA (Bosnian Serb Army) Corps claimed that the (Bosnian army) have made territorial gains in Rajlovac area," Maj. Van Biesebroeck said. "They also gained 50 to 100 metres on the confrontation line in Grbavica (in central Sarajevo)."

The Bosnian army had advanced about one kilometre near the railway in Rajlovac, a Serb-held northwest suburb of Sarajevo where a Yugoslav army base was once located. He said Serb forces that encircle the city fired 743 shells on Sarajevo Thursday, wounding 23 civilians. Muslim sniper fire wounded five in the suburb of Grbavica Thursday, Bosnian Serb News Agency (SRNA) reported.

The United Nations said the ceasefire, covering the Catholic Christmas, had been approved by General Ante Roso, commander of the Bosnian Croat Defence Council (HVO), and Bosnian army General Rasim Delic at a meeting at U.N. headquarters in the central Bosnian town of Kiseljak.

Bosnian Serb Commander Ratko Mladic has also agreed to the truce after meeting Wednesday Lieutenant General Francis Brigueumont of the U.N. Protection Force.

"General Mladic said he would respect it so long as he was not attacked," Mr. Van

Biesebroeck said. In northern Bosnia, U.N. Nordic troops came under fire three times within a few minutes Thursday as they inspected front lines where Serbs and Muslims are fighting, the spokesman said. No injuries were reported.

Meanwhile, the leader of Muslim rebels fighting the Bosnian government army accused it Thursday of enlisting as many as 2,000 Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas intent on destroying Bosnia's secular tradition.

"Our estimates are that roughly 2,000 Mujahideen (Islamic holy warriors) are fighting in the Bosnian army," Fikret Abdic, the leader of rebel Muslims in Bosnia's breakaway Bihać enclave, said in an interview.

Mr. Abdic, quoted in the debut issue of a weekly newspaper published by his forces, said the fundamentalists were both foreign mercenaries and "extremists from Sandzak," a Muslim enclave in neighbouring Serbia.

"Behind the shield of introducing Islam, they are in fact sowing terror in the population and inflicting enormous harm to the reputation of Bosnian Muslims," said Abdic, a former political rival of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

Islamic fundamentalism has gained some ground in the Bosnian army with its growing ranks of desperate refugee fighters expelled from Serb-held territory

Don't hold your breath for peace deal, Sinn Fein says

BELFAST (R) — The IRA's long campaign to end British rule of Northern Ireland was set to go on into the new year after its political chief said time was needed to digest a groundbreaking Anglo-Irish call for peace.

"There are no quick fixes in this situation," Gerry Adams, leader of the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein, said in his first response to Wednesday's key joint declaration by the British

and Irish Prime Ministers John Major and Albert Reynolds.

Their complex statement offers the Irish Republican Army (IRA) a place at the negotiating table three months after they prove they are renouncing violence to end British rule in Northern Ireland.

"These deliberations will take some time and will require clarification from Dublin about aspects of the declaration," Mr. Adams said in Bel-

fast.

But Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring said: "We will not be entering into any discussions with Sinn Fein on the document."

Few people had expected an instant reply to the declaration in which Britain for the first time formally acknowledged that Ireland could be reunified, after 72 years, if most people in the North agreed.

S.Africa apologises for apartheid

CAPE TOWN (R) — South Africa's white minority government apologised for apartheid Friday as it presented parliament with the draft of an interim constitution giving blacks full political rights for the first time.

"We who were responsible for apartheid are now saying we want to leave that wrong behind. We are saying we are sorry," said Constitutional Development Minister Roelf Meyer, who led the government team in two years of democracy talks.

African National Congress (ANC) Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa, who led the ANC team in the multi-party talks, watched impassively from the public gallery as right-wingers derided the move to black majority rule.

"I am feeling quite elated because we have reached a moment when we can move away from an apartheid dispensation. It is the culmination of what our people have struggled for many years," he told reporters before the three-day debate began.

Mr. Ramaphosa said he still hoped the pro-apartheid Conservative Party (CP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party, led by Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who drop their objections to the constitution and join the process of transition to democracy.

But he condemned Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini for urging Zulus, the country's largest ethnic group, to oppose the all-race Transitional Executive Council, which gave blacks their first taste of power when it was set up two weeks ago.

"Resist, I command you. Resist, I implore you," King Zwelithini told supporters Thursday at the site of a 194 massacre of British troops 114 years ago.

Mr. Ramaphosa told reporters the king's comments could exacerbate political violence. "It really was totally irresponsible. It is a move that could lead to a lot of conflict in the country," he said.

Inkatha and the CP are among five right-wing groups that boycotted the final stages of democracy negotiations and have formed a Freedom Alliance to oppose the present framework for a transition to majority rule.

But while the CP boycotted three days of preparatory discussion of the draft constitution in a parliamentary standing committee earlier this week, Inkatha legislators participated and proposed some amendments.

Mr. Buthelezi, who called Thursday for self-determination for Zulus, denied in a statement the separate strategies indicated Inkatha was close to a separate settlement with the government.

"To infer that Inkatha participation is in itself cause for optimism or indicative of a split in the Freedom Alliance is both misleading and malicious," he said.

The Freedom Alliance last week listed 13 conditions for accepting the constitution and cancelling plans to boycott the country's first all-race election on April 27.

The government and the ANC said in response they would only discuss the alliance list if the conservatives agreed in advance to contest the election.

A government spokesman confirmed that Inkatha negotiator Ben Ngubane had asked for a meeting, but said it was unclear whether he would speak for the alliance or for Inkatha.

A senior cabinet source said President F.W. de Klerk was

not personally trying to woo Mr. Buthelezi into the process, but added: "There is a real push underway because Wednesday is D-day for the constitution."

The white-dominated parliament, which has always excluded the country's five-to-one black majority, is due to vote on the constitution Wednesday at what could be its last sitting.

Meanwhile, a great-grandson of India's pacifist leader Mahatma Gandhi, Kusb Ramgobin, died of wounds after being shot by gunmen in his Durban flat, police said Friday.

Police spokesman Major Bala Naidoo said Mr. Ramgobin's mother Mrs. Ela Gandhi was a grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi spent a number of years in Natal province as a lawyer and civil rights advocate before returning to India in 1914 to oppose British rule there. A gunman shot Mr. Gandhi dead in 1948.

Maj. Naidoo said Mr. Ramgobin, 29-year-old son of a senior Natal cultural official in the African National Congress (ANC), was found with a serious gunshot wound in his back in his flat early Thursday and later died at Durban's Addington Hospital.

Mr. Ramgobin lived in his flat with a bodyguard.

Maj. Naidoo quoted the bodyguard as telling police he had been overpowered, bound and gagged by two gunmen. A third man held him captive while the others entered Mr. Ramgobin's bedroom.

A shot rang out followed by a scream, Maj. Naidoo quoted the guard as saying. "The men fled in Mr. Ramgobin's car and several household items were missing."

Police said no arrests had yet been made.

Clinton nominates Inman as defence secretary

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton has named retired Navy Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, a well-respected former intelligence official who had to be persuaded to take the job, to replace Les Aspin as defence secretary.

"He has established a reputation for penetrating analysis, strong leadership and a rock-solid commitment to this nation," Mr. Clinton told reporters as he announced the nomination in the White House Rose Garden.

In a response remarkable for its candor, Adm. Inman, 62, said he had voted for former President George Bush in last year's presidential election and did not seek or want the Pentagon job, but took it out of commitment to "duty and country."

The lean, gap-toothed Texan said he regarded himself as "an operator, hopefully with a strategic view," and that he would draw on his business experience over the last decade to assure that every defence dollar was well spent.

"My sense in travelling the country is that the public is less concerned about what we're doing overseas or our commitments than whether we are getting a dollar value for a dollar spent in defence," he said.

Adm. Inman added: "I would hope at the end of our years of working together we will have persuaded them, Mr. President, that they were (getting their money's worth)."

Adm. Inman's nomination brought bipartisan plaudits, though some Republicans questioned whether he would win the budget battles that helped force Mr. Aspin from office.

Senator Sam Nunn, a Georgia Democrat who heads the Armed Services Committee, said he hoped to begin confirmation hearings on Jan. 25, the day the Senate returns to work.

"I expect Admiral Inman to be confirmed rapidly by the Senate. His long and distinguished career clearly gives him the credentials necessary to take on the difficult job of running the Defence Department," Senator Phil Gramm, a Texas Republican, said.

Bryan Adams to play in Vietnam

HANOI (R) — Canadian rocker Bryan Adams will become the first major Western pop star to perform in Vietnam since the Vietnam War when he gives a concert in Ho Chi Minh City next month, the promoters announced Friday. Adams will play a one-night stand on Jan. 16 at the small Pham Dinh Phung Stadium in the former Saigon, Vietnam's biggest city. "We have everything in place for a superb concert in front of an audience of 5,000 to 6,000 people in one of Asia's most exciting cities," Bruce Aitken, managing director of Hong Kong-based promoters Sports Asia, said in a statement sent to Reuters in Hanoi. Adams' concert coincides with the second Ho Chi Minh City Marathon, also organised by Sports Asia. The events are signs of Vietnam's growing opening up to the West — in the arts as well as in business and diplomacy — since it launched reforms in 1986 to convert its communist economy to a market system.

Hanoi-born pianist Dang Thai Son and the National Symphony Orchestra under a British guest conductor, Peter Fletcher, drew a capacity crowd for a concert in Hanoi's French-built Opera House Thursday night. Fletcher was one of the first West conductors to perform here, though the French cultural agency, Alliance Francaise, has brought in jazz, classical and ballet groups this year.

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Jackson appears incoherent in court video

LOS ANGELES (R) — Jurors saw a sluggish and almost incoherent Michael Jackson on a videotape filmed by lawyers just before he admitted he was addicted to painkilling drugs and abruptly cancelled his world tour. The video was taken in Mexico City by attorneys for two would-be songwriters who have sued the pop superstar in Los Angeles Superior Court, claiming he stole three of his best-selling songs from them. Thriller, The Girl and Mine and We Are the World. Jackson, who appeared drowsy and heavy-lidded and paused for long periods on being asked questions, said he wrote or co-wrote each of the three songs but could not remember why or when he had written them. On another occasion he appeared to falter when asked to name the members of his former band, the Jackson Five, which was comprised of himself and four of his brothers.

The videotaped deposition, or sworn statement, was taken by lawyers for the plaintiffs on Nov. 10 and 11 in Mexico City. On Nov. 12 Jackson quit his world tour and flew to Europe with his friend, actress Elizabeth Taylor, to seek treatment in a drug rehabilitation clinic. Jackson, who returned to his Neverland Valley estate near the posh southern California city of Santa Barbara last Friday, has been accused in a civil lawsuit of sexually molesting a 13-year-old boy over a four-month period last year.

The singer has denied the sexual molestation charges and is contesting the current song copyright case. Jackson's lawyers have said he was treated in the clinic, at an undisclosed location in Europe, for a month before reappearing in the United States.

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Infant kidnapped 2 years ago returned

DESSAU, Germany (AP) — An infant stolen from a baby carriage in the eastern city of Dessau two years ago has been found and returned to his parents, police said. Wilbert Grusser was traced to the western city of Duisburg, about 40 kilometres north of Bonn, said police spokesman Ralf Becker, head of the search team. The apparently healthy boy was living in the home of a 30-year-old German woman and her 28-year-old male companion, who are suspected of kidnapping him, Mr. Becker said.

Mr. Becker said the child was found after authorities traced down dozens of tips received over the past two years on his possible whereabouts. The boy was given medical tests to prove his identity and returned to his parents Tuesday, the spokesman said. Grusser was 12 weeks old on Nov. 12, 1991, when he disappeared from a baby carriage his mother parked outside the entrance of a shop in Dessau while she went inside to make a purchase. Mr. Becker said that the woman suspect had had a miscarriage several months before the kidnapping. No other motive was uncovered, he said.

The names of the suspects were not released and it was not immediately clear if charges would be filed. ARD national television reported the child apparently lived normally with the couple who kept him.

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Beijing anger fails to rattle Hong Kong

HONG KONG (Agencies) — Hong Kong's stock market climbed more than 200 points Friday as investors turned a deaf ear to Chinese warnings of damage to British business in the row over democratic reform in the colony.

Beijing was venting its fury over Governor Chris Patten's presentation of a bill containing part of his reform proposals to the colonial legislature Wednesday.

China, which takes back Hong Kong in 1997, said Mr. Patten's action had destroyed any hope of continuing talks on the issue that have already dragged on for seven months without result.

"The British move marked the end of the negotiations. (Britain) must be held responsible for all the serious consequences arising therefrom," Foreign Ministry spokesman Wu Jianmin said Thursday.

"What the British side has done has sabotaged the talks so this will surely affect Sino-British relations, including economic and trade relations," he added.

Barrie McWhirter, executive director of the British Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, said: "Going on pre-

vious experience (China's) comments are much worse than the actuality — the hawk is worse than the dove."

The threats drew little response from the stock market which is trading at an all-time high.

The Hang Seng Index, which had climbed over 300 points by mid-afternoon on strong turnover, ended more than 200 points higher, prompting some brokers to predict the index would shatter the 11,000 mark before long.

"It's all a storm in a teacup," said China trader B.Y. Wong, a director at Sun-Hung Kai Investment Services.

"People are more interested in economic developments in China rather than politics in Beijing and Hong Kong."

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's most popular Democrat Friday warned Governor Patten against watering down his proposals to strengthen the territory's assembly in the twilight years of British rule.

Martin Lee, chairman of the United Democrats of Hong Kong, questioned Mr. Patten's commitment to extend democracy in the British colony before it reverts to China in 1997.

"I see a big question mark there," Mr. Lee told AFP

when asked if Mr. Patten were trustworthy.

"As a lawyer, I would give him the benefit of the doubt. But I'm concerned that at the end of the day, he will be giving to Beijing a legislature that Beijing can control," he said.

Mr. Lee warned that Mr. Patten's original proposals are nothing less than "the bottom line" for his party, which controls 12 of the 18 directly-elected seats in the 60-member Legislative Council.

Mr. Patten submitted some of the reform proposals in the assembly Wednesday, triggering fresh outrage from Beijing, which vowed never to resume negotiations on the issue and threatened to hit at trade with Britain.

Those attacks continued Friday in the English-language China Daily newspaper, which called his unilateral action "a vile move" that could trigger "possible chaos" in Hong Kong in the run-up to 1997.

But Mr. Patten has yet to say whether he will follow up later with his original October 1992 proposal to substantially increase the voting franchise in the 1994 local-level and 1995 legislative polls.

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Australia's treasurer resigns

CANBERRA (R) — Australian Treasurer John Dawkins ended a stormy year in his political life Friday by announcing his resignation and returning to the back benches. Mr. Dawkins said he would retire from politics altogether before the next election, due in three years. The office of Prime Minister Paul Keating said a new treasurer — the top minister responsible for fiscal policy — would be announced early next year. "There comes a time in the course of politics for one to reflect not only on the past but also on the future and for me that time has come," said Mr. Dawkins, treasurer since 1991. "I have today informed the prime minister of my desire to move to the backbench as a step towards leaving parliament between now and the next election." The 46-year-old Dawkins said, "The Australian dollar fell half a U.S. cent on the news. Mr. Dawkins' resignation came as a surprise, although he had alluded indirectly to the strain of the job after his unpopular August budget for the year ending June 1994 ran into strong public and parliamentary resistance. However, his position appeared to be strengthened after the budget finally passed."

French radioactive site sealed off

ROUEN, France (AFP) — A factory site once used for making luminous clocks has been sealed off because it is radioactive, authorities said here. The factory at Saint Nicolas D'Allermont, near Dieppe, was used by the Bayard firm which until the 1980's used radium chloride to make the hands and faces of its alarm clocks luminous. The Green Environmentalist Party released the results of a study showing the presence of radon gas, toxic when inhaled, and Radium 226, which is extremely toxic when ingested. Authorities said the site would be cleaned up and called a meeting of people living nearby who expressed alarm that their children had often played there.

4 die in Argentine province riot

BUENOS AIRES (R) — At least four people were killed and 50 injured Thursday when rioting civil servants burned public buildings and looted officials' homes in the capital of one of Argentina's poorest provinces. Civil servants in the province of Santiago Del Estero, some 650 miles (1,000 km) northwest of Buenos Aires, angry at not being paid, rallied against Argentine President Carlos Menem, his government and the province governor, Fernando Lobo, as they rampaged through the city, local television reported. Hundreds of state employees marched on the government house and clashed with police after the province announced it could not meet overdue salaries, witnesses said. After local police retreated and Mr. Lobo fled in a fire truck, protesters broke into the palace and set it on fire. "The mobs took over the governor's office, the legislature and the courthouse. They're also breaking into the houses of former governors and some legislators and looting them," Resident Hugo Ferreira told Reuters in a telephone interview. In the capital Buenos Aires, Interior Minister Carlos Ruckauf said the death toll had risen to four and the federal government was sending in paramilitary troops to help restore order.

Chechen mutineers' tanks withdrawn

MOSCOW (R) — Talks between Dzhokar Dudayev, leader of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic in southern Russia, and army bosses opposed to his rule ended inconclusively late Thursday, ITAR-TASS news agency said. But it said the opposition's tanks, armoured vehicles and troops had been withdrawn from their earlier positions around Mr. Dudayev's presidential palace in the Chechen capital, Grozny, and the

Philippine Air Force loses 2nd plane

MANILA (R) — A Philippine military training aircraft crashed Friday, killing an instructor and a student pilot, an air force spokesman said. It was the second air force plane to crash this week. The propeller-driven Marchetti Trainer lost power and crashed into a coconut grove about one kilometre from the runway at an air base in Lipa, south of Manila, the spokesman said. On Wednesday, all 27 people aboard a Hercules C-130 transport plane were killed when the aircraft hit a hill and exploded in flames. Efforts to recover the last bodies continued Friday at the crash site on a forested hillside about 250 kilometres south of Manila. The C-130, carrying 19 passengers and eight crew, went down in bad weather while ferrying relief supplies to the typhoon-hit Bicol region.

U.S. admits Haiti diplomacy stalled

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has admitted that diplomatic efforts to resolve Haiti's political crisis are at a standstill and binned at frustration with its policy centerpiece, exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. State Department spokesman Mike McCurry refused to confirm media reports that Mr. Aristide was a principal reason for the scuttling of a last-ditch diplomatic initiative to reconcile opposing political forces in the impoverished Caribbean nation. But his public statement of support for Mr. Aristide at the department's daily news briefing was lacking in enthusiasm. Asked if the United States still backed Mr. Aristide, Mr. McCurry said: "We still support a process that leads to the return of the democratically-elected president of Haiti, yes."

هكذا صحت القصة

French soccer revolution opens with whimper rather than bang

PARIS (R) — France's promised soccer revolution opened with a whimper rather than a bang Friday when Aime Jacquet was named as national team trainer.

A series of crisis meetings aimed at changing the fabric of French soccer following last month's shock elimination from the World Cup, ended in the unanimous and uncontroversial choice of the experienced Jacquet.

Jacquet, 52, was assistant to former manager Gerard Houllier, who resigned after successive home defeats to Israel and Bulgaria stunned a nation which had taken qualification for next year's World Cup finals for granted.

Houllier himself had been appointed by the same route, taking over from Michel Platini in 1992 after serving as his assistant.

The appointment of Jacquet was the first major decision by the French Football Federation (FFF) since World Cup elimination opened a period of turmoil which has seen Federation President Jean Fournier-Fayard resign also.

Soccer authorities are considering major structural changes and new faces in top positions as a remedy for the national team's failure on the pitch.

But their second decision was equally uncontroversial. After threatening Marseille with a French Cup ban as punishment for the Valenciennes bribery scandal, the FFF's advisory board decided to let the European Champions take part after all.

The appointment of the highly successful former Bordeaux trainer Jacquet was acclaimed by most sections of French soccer, though there was some surprise that there was no mention of it being a provisional post.

The federation had been expected to name an interim trainer to take charge for two friendly matches against Italy and Chile in February and March with a new man taking over at the end of the season — after elections for a new FFF president.

Jacquet, twice capped by France as a midfielder in the 1960s, coached Bordeaux for nine years during the heady days of the 1980s when they won three league titles and two French Cups, including a double in 1987.

He also guided his team into the semifinals of the European Cup in 1985 and the last four of the Cup Winners' Cup in 1987.

But he later had disappointing spells with Montpellier and Nancy before joining Houllier with the national team last year.

Monaco trainer Arsene Wenger, regarded by many as a leading candidate for the national post, welcomed the FFF decision.

"It's a logical move," he said. "He has a lot of experience at top level, he's had success with his clubs and he knows the players well."

Marseille, provisionally stripped of last season's league title by the FFF in February for trying to bribe Valenciennes to lose a league match in May, were happy at not being banned from the cup.

The club has already been barred from defending its European title and playing in the intercontinental and super cups.

Club Vice-President Jean-Louis Leverau said: "The members of the advisory board recognised that we could not be indefinitely punished. It would have been particularly unjust if Marseille, which has a record number of cup victories, could not have taken part."

Graf: Seles' stabbing put extra pressure

PARIS (R) — World number one Steffi Graf said Friday she had been put under extra pressure this year after the stabbing in April of her arch-rival Monica Seles.

With Seles out of action after the knife attack by a Graf fan, the German enjoyed her best season in a long time, regaining the number one slot and winning three titles in successive Grand Slam tournaments.

But she told a news conference the stabbing had been an added burden.

"I felt I had something to do with it because it was a fan of mine who did it," she said.

"I felt bad about it, though I couldn't have done anything about it. Then people were asking me a lot about it and it was difficult to answer."

"There was a lot of pressure on me. Later in the year people said I was winning because she was absent and that wasn't easy either."

Graf said she had spoken to Seles recently. "We talked a few weeks ago," she said. "We've been in touch. I don't want to talk about what we said. It was a conversation between the two of us. But she said she hopes to be back in Australia (for January's Australian Open)."

"It was a terrible thing which happened to her. It's difficult for her to react to what happened. I think that has been more difficult than anything else. That's what people have to understand."

"I had a problem of concentration after what happened in Hamburg. I wasn't on the court. It was difficult to be playing out there."

Graf said she hoped the Yugoslav would get back to her old form despite her long layoff.

"I'm hoping for that as much as other people do," she said. "I have no idea if she gets back to her best again. But she's always been very determined."

"She's always very well prepared. If she comes to Australia, she will be ready for the tournament in her mind. But she needs some time. I hope she will be in good shape."

"Hopefully Monica will play in Australia and things will get back to normal."

Graf said she thought her own play had improved during the year. "I've got more confidence in my game. I'm choosing my shots better," she said.

"I think my backhand has got better and when I need to I can come in a lot more. I will work on that more in the next few weeks. I'll play more approach shots."

The German said she had no problem with motivation even though she had won all the titles she ever wanted to win.

Foser snatches downhill skiing win

VAL GARDENA, Italy (R) — Little-known racer Markus Foser of Liechtenstein snatched a dramatic victory in the opening men's downhill of the Alpine Skiing World Cup season Friday.

Foser skied the classic Saslong piste in a time of two minutes 08.90 seconds to dash the hopes of equally obscure Austrian Werner Franz.

By an amazing coincidence the same pair finished one-two among the lesser mortals of the European Cup circuit in a race on the same course last weekend.

Franz, skiing with start number 52, had already put a premature end to the victory celebrations of overall World Cup holder Marc Girardelli, who looked set for his first downhill win in almost five years after clocking 2:09.21.

The Austrian who competes for Luxembourg watched with disbelief as number 66 Foser trumped his time, and had to settle for third spot.

Friday's Downhill replaced a race scheduled for Val d'Isere, France, last weekend which had to be called off because of bad weather. A second downhill will be raced here Saturday.

Poor weather made only one practice session possible for this race, leaving no real guide to form.

But no one can have expected so many big names to be bumbled as effects of the bright sunshine on the 3,446 metres Saslong Piste made the course faster the longer the race went on.

Swiss Franz Heinzer, a winner here twice in the past and World Cup holder in the discipline, finished way down in 58th, more than three seconds behind Foser.

Norwegian World Cup leader Kjetil Andre Aamodt was 48th with his closest challenger Guenther Mader of Austria finished level with Heinzer.

Five-times overall World Cup winner Girardelli presumed he was the victor and apologised to Austrian Olympic downhill champion Patrick Ortlieb, who has never won a World Cup race, for edging him out by just 0.08 seconds.

The hapless Ortlieb ended up in sixth place as Canadians Rob Boyd and Darren Thorburn nipped between him and Girardelli.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSON
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OPTICAL ILLUSION

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ J 9
♥ K 6
♦ Q 3
♣ A J 9 4

WEST
♠ 5 2
♥ Q 10 8 3 2
♦ J 9 8 2
♣ 2

EAST
♠ K 8
♥ J 7 5 4
♦ 10 8 5 4
♣ K 8 7

SOUTH
♠ A 10 6 7 4
♥ A 8
♦ K 7
♣ 10 8 5 3

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 NT Pass 3 ♠ Pass
3 ♠ Pass 4 NT Pass
5 ♠ Pass 5 ♠ Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠

Even looking at all four hands, it is difficult to see how six spades can be defeated. Yet down it went, and we would not be surprised if the majority of experts wouldn't adopt the same line as did our unfortunate declarer against such highly inventive defense.

With a slightly unbalanced hand, it is not surprising South elected to play in a suit aces rather than no trump. However, six no trump would depend on no more than one of the two black-suit finesses and would have costed home in comfort.

West chose to lead the deuce of clubs, immediately presenting declarer with the problem that it might be a singleton. To guard against West winning the king and giving partner a ruff, declarer elected to rise with the ace of clubs.

Had East followed routinely with a low club, declarer would have taken the spade finesse, drawn trumps and forced out the king of clubs. That would have been South's only loser. But East dropped the king of clubs under the ace!

This spectacular falsecard created the impression that East had the singleton club, so the trump finesse was an unnecessary risk—declarer could well afford to let East win a trump trick, if that defender held the king. To draw trumps as fast as possible, declarer led a trump. East scooped in the king of spades and, to declarer's amazement, gave West a club ruff for down one. Bravo!

FIFA's gamble pays off in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS (R) — An inspired gamble by FIFA, in search of their own great American dream, brings them appropriately to this casino city for the variety show they call the World Cup draw Sunday.

Soccer's world governing body, shrugging off howls of protest five years ago when they awarded the United States the 1994 World Cup, plumped for the glitzy gambling capital to host the showcase event with the swaggering confidence of someone who knows their hunch paid off handsomely.

They have already been counting the profits that enticed them to the United States, in television revenue and, more reassuringly, from ticket sales which have matched all promises of a sell-out tournament as each consignment went on sale.

When FIFA deals the cards before the watching world on Sunday, it knows that no matter who plays who in the opening rounds, the Americans will have no trouble filling the seats.

The Americans have been promising the most successful World Cup ever in terms of both spectators and cash, and with ticket demand exceeding availability, they have been directing their energies to organising a month-long party soccer will never forget.

That has meant some clever shifting of the goalposts for the draw to squeeze the most out of the month-long tournament, which begins on June 17, and base teams in cities with large ethnic followings.

There have always been raised eyebrows at World Cup draws at how lucky luck seems to be surprisingly excessive with her favours, and questions about whether FIFA possesses powers of illusion with its selections.

But on this occasion, in an unprecedented break from the traditional seeding of teams for the finals draw, FIFA has divided most of the 24 nations into geographical equations in an attempt to balance out the six groups.

And in another tweak aimed at maximising the interest, FIFA said if the balls did not come out of the bowls to their liking they would simply place the teams where they wanted them — in keeping with their principles of not having countries from the same continent together.

No group will contain two teams from South America, Africa, or Asia, and the United States will be kept apart from its confederation partner Mexico. Five of the six groups will also contain only two European teams.

With the top seeds selected according to previous World Cup form — Germany, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Belgium plus hosts the U.S. — the teams from the other three groups will not necessarily end up where the random draw places them.

If, for instance Colombia are drawn to play in Argentina's or Brazil's group, they will be simply shifted along to fill up the U.S. section, or put in with a European team.

Adelaide loses F-1 Grand Prix to Melbourne

MELBOURNE (R) — The Australian Grand Prix motor race, held in Adelaide since 1985, will shift to Melbourne after 1996 after a secret deal signed three months ago.

Victoria State Premier Jeff Kennett announced Friday.

The Australian 60 million (\$40 million) bid to wrest the event from Adelaide was signed by the Formula One Constructors' Association (FOCA) and commercial interests on Sept. 16.

China, Indonesia and Malaysia were also reported to be interested in taking over from Adelaide after its contract expired for the event, which has a television viewing audience of about 500 million in 102 countries.

The loss of the race, which pumps about A\$40 million (\$27 million) a year into the economy of the Adelaide area, is a major blow to the state of South Australia and its weak-old government.

"Of course we're all shattered by this news," new Premier Dean Brown said. "This is a severe blow to South Australia."

Melbourne will stage the Grand Prix for five years with the option for another five.

The venue will be a street circuit around Albert Park Lake in Melbourne's inner suburbs.

Mr. Kennett said the deal was kept secret for commercial reasons and to keep it from becoming an issue in South Australia's state election held last Saturday.

"This will ensure we will have an event here not only of international standing but probably of pre-eminence of all international events," Mr. Kennett told reporters.

Ron Walker, chairman of the Melbourne Major Events Company, who headed the committee that put the bid together, said the Grand Prix would be bigger than Melbourne's 1956 Olympic Games.

Walker said the Grand Prix would create 1,000 jobs and bring A\$150 million (\$100 million) a year into Victoria. That is more than the Adelaide turnover because of Melbourne's larger population and its reputation as the sporting capital of Australia. Melbourne also hosts the Australian Open tennis tournament and the Melbourne Cup horse race.

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Wadi Saqra tel: 646080

Los Angeles.

In fact, the organisers have had a harder job in persuading Hollywood's stars to make the one hour flight from Los Angeles to Las Vegas for the 90-minute televised ceremony than they did luring FIFA to America.

With three days remaining to the draw, being shown in 125 countries to an estimated audience of 500 million, the organisers were still unwilling to produce a definitive list of celebrities, or reveal who would draw the all-important balls from their giant goldfish bowls.

Blatter said Thursday he would not be told until a day before, but suggested the star performer would be a woman. Rumours continued to change all week, although Fay Dunaway, remained favourite.

When pressed about the absence of the final line-up, organisers explained that absolute confirmation and the Hollywood signatures were not quite set.

In another example that all that glitters in the neon city of Las Vegas is certainly not gold, FIFA had another piece of misfortune when a row broke out between its own major attraction, Pele, and its President Joao Havelange.

Pele was due to take the stage, but was seemingly barred by Havelange Monday after the Brazilian Confederation President Ricardo Teixeira — Havelange's son-in-law — filed a defamation lawsuit over Pele's claims of financial impropriety.

Blatter said: "Pele will be with us, with the FIFA family on Sunday. What his position will be we will see Sunday."

Winning teams in the first round of the World Cup finals will be awarded with three points instead of two.

FIFA announced Thursday that they would make changes to the traditional format of the first round league stage as part of a major move to make the opening thrusts of the World Cup more entertaining.

Better refereeing

FIFA also promised improvements in refereeing at the 1994 World Cup after much criticised performances at previous finals.

"You may rest assured that we will see better control of matches in 1994," Blatter told a news conference.

Blatter admitted that top class referees were in short supply but was confident that the use of specialist line judges would help improve standards.

In previous World Cups, referees have been used to run the line.

Blatter said a short list of 50 referees had been chosen to attend a pre-up course in Dallas in March, which would be used to select the final 22.

A FIFA spokesman denied that Brazilian club Flamengo had sent them a video of a game involving Renato Marinho, one of the referees chosen to attend the course.

Flamengo were outraged at Marinho's handling of their Brazilian semifinal championship match against Corinthians, saying he had failed to award them two clear penalties and then wrongly sent off their goalkeeper Gilmar for retaliation.

They had threatened to send FIFA a tape of the game.

Blatter said it was possible that a proposed new rule allowing teams to substitute two outfield players plus the goalkeeper may be in force at the World Cup. The rule will be discussed by FIFA in Zurich in March and, if approved, will be implemented in time for the 1994 finals.

Two players from each team will be randomly selected to give doping tests at each of the 32 matches in the finals, Blatter said.

He added that all 88 doping tests carried out during the qualifying matches had given negative results.

It was also announced that FIFA had turned down a request from South Korea for a united Korean side, featuring North and South Korean players.

The two countries fielded a joint side at the 1991 World Youth Championship in Portugal, but Blatter said that since both countries had taken part in the World Cup qualifying tournament FIFA could not allow a joint team.

FIFA also announced a new award for the best goalkeeper in the competition. It will be named the Yashin Cup after the late former Soviet goalkeeper Lev Yashin.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Syria: Israel offers compensation for Golan

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Israel has proposed that Syria be given financial compensation in exchange for abandoning its claims to the Golan Heights, but Damascus has denounced the offer, official Syrian radio said on Friday. "Some people in Israel called for Syria to abandon its demand for the return of the Golan, or accept a compromise or foreign financial aid in exchange for the Golan," it said. The proposal was made following a peace mission at the beginning of the month by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, it said. "Israel is no longer just committing blatant acts of piracy before the world, but is also calling for Syria to give up its territory and not care about the future of 150,000 Syrians displaced from the Golan," the radio said. The Israeli proposals were likely to "undermine the peace process and reinforce the conviction of countries in the region that Israel does not want peace," the radio added.

6 Israeli rightwing extremists arrested

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Police have arrested six Israeli right-wing extremists suspected of smuggling weapons, police said here Friday. The six suspects, arrested on Thursday on arms smuggling and possession charges, will appear before a judge on Saturday who will decide whether to extend their period of detention, the sources said. Some of the suspects, from the Jerusalem area, had been questioned before, following anti-Palestinian attacks, the sources said. They did not specify which organisation the suspects belonged to. On Nov. 25 Rabbi Shmuel Trigano, a senior official in the anti-Arah Kach movement, was arrested at Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv and found in possession of bomb-making materials.

French teachers strike in challenge to Balladur

PARIS (AFP) — French teachers and students struck massively Friday in what could turn into the first serious challenge from the left to Prime Minister Edouard Balladur's nine-month-old conservative government. As teachers and students prepared to march through Paris and 58 provincial cities across the country, the opposition Socialist Party, reduced to a shadow of its former self in legislative elections last March, tried to exploit the strike to hit out at the government. All teachers' and student unions backed the 24-hour strike called in protest against a new education law rushed through the senate at dawn this week under an emergency procedure. Trade unions said that up to 80 per cent of teachers were on strike and that some schools had closed. Education authorities said the strike turnout was between 40 and 80 per cent in the secondary education sector. Socialist President Francois Mitterrand strongly criticised the government for acting over-hastily "without taking time to think." Speaking in Ceret, French Catalonia, he said he was "shocked" that the government had "rushed parliament where the opposition is just as respectable as the majority."

Kuwait says it made 'border concessions'

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Kuwait made territorial concessions to Iraq on their disputed border, at the request of the United Nations, a senior Kuwaiti official said Friday. "Kuwait made concessions to Iraq at the request of the international demarcation committee for half of Khof Al Zubayr and a long strip along the land border," said the Foreign Ministry under-secretary, Suleiman Al Shabih. "Iraq now has a long coastline stretching more than 72 kilometres" he told the official United Arab Emirates news agency Wam. "Yet the Iraqi regime still claims it is being strangled." Mr. Shabih said his country has submitted documents dating back to 1751 to the U.N. commission, indicating the concessions were made on historical claims and not the border as it stood since 1963. Iraq's acceptance of a post-war border, as determined by the U.N. commission, is among the world body's conditions for the lifting of the embargo in force since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Ethiopia arrests opposition figures

ADDIS ABABA (R) — Ethiopian police arrested four opposition members who had come to Addis Ababa for a dissent peace conference, state radio said on Friday. It said Ahera Yemane-AB, Geneneb Assefa, Guenet Giram and Yihun Zeneb were detained on suspicion of unspecified crimes. Some of them had links with the outlawed Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), bitter enemy of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) which dominates the government, it said. They will appear in court after investigations are completed, the radio said. On Thursday, the radio announced the arrest of ISBA Gutema, a leader of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and a former minister of education in the transitional government. The OLF had "declared war" against the government, launching offensives in various parts of the country, it said. The reports of new clashes coincided with a government announcement that polls for a new constituent assembly could be held next May.

Sedki arrives in Syria for talks

DAMASCUS (R) — Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sedki is visiting Damascus leading 11 ministers of his cabinet to co-chair meetings of the Syrian-Egyptian joint commission. He told reporters on arrival that the commission, holding its sixth meeting since its establishment some four years ago, would discuss ways to boost economic, commercial and cultural cooperation. The prime minister was accompanied by the ministers of finance, economy, oil, industry, planning, transport, cabinet affairs, local administration, international cooperation, health and scientific research. Dr. Sedki hinted that the commission might expand to include other Gulf Arab countries later although there were no immediate plans for this.

Turkish militant accused of bank attack

PARIS (AFP) — Turkish militant Celat Aydogan, 29, appeared in court here Friday accused of taking part in an attack on a Turkish bank had extorting money from Turkish businessmen. The prosecution demanded three years' jail for Mr. Aydogan, who was identified from pictures taken by a surveillance camera at a branch of the Bosphorus Bank here. A commando of militants of the leftist Turkish group Dev Sol smashed eight windows with hammers and sprayed on the bank facade. Mr. Aydogan, who denies he is a Dev Sol member but just an "anti-fascist" militant, was first sentenced in his absence — to two years' jail and two years banishment from French territory — but gave himself up on Sept. 30 last to contest the sentence. He was also accused of extorting money from 17 Turkish shopkeepers, restaurant owners or managers of dressmaking workshops who signed a petition on May 1, 1992 complaining Dev Sol militants were demanding cash payments ranging from \$17 to ten times as much. One of them suffered a serious head wound after refusing to pay the "revolutionary tax," the court was told. The court will hand down judgement on Jan. 7.

Turks find World War 1 cruiser in Aegean

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish divers have found the wreck of the World War 1 cruiser Breslau in the northeast Aegean Sea, a Turkish foundation said on Friday. The 5,200-tonne German-built Breslau went down on Jan. 20, 1918 with 330 seamen after hitting mines. A spokesman of the Rahmi M. KOC Industry and Cultural Foundation, whose divers found the wreck while making a documentary on the vessel, said it was located at a depth of 73 metres and was well preserved. The 138-metre cruiser was found in November 6.5-kilometre southwest of Gökceada, a large Turkish Aegean island formerly known as Imroz. Built in 1911, the Breslau was given by Germany to the Turks in 1914 to lure Ottoman Turkey into the war on Germany's side. Renamed Midilli by the Turks, the cruiser sank after hitting mines during an Ottoman naval raid on the once allied-controlled island.



AID AFTER ASSAULT: An Israeli borderguard soldier violently arrested him following clashes in Arab East Jerusalem on Friday (AFP photo)

FIS sets terms for talks with Algiers, decries killings

BONN (AFP) — A leader of Algeria's banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) set tough conditions Friday for talks with the government and condemned the killing of foreigners that has prompted an exodus from the country.

FIS leader Rabah Kebir told a news conference in Bonn that Algerians must meet five conditions before his group would join negotiations on a political crisis that has led to dozens of murders, most of them claimed by Muslim fundamentalist groups trying to overthrow the government.

Mr. Kebir, chairman of the FIS's overseas executive body, called for:

— "The release of all political prisoners in Algeria, notably jailed FIS leaders."

— "The repeal of laws and regulations passed after the military takeover."

— Creation of a "free and independent" committee, not controlled by the government and incorporating the main political forces in Algeria, as well as leading religious and judicial figures and objective journalists.

— Bringing to trial those "responsible for recent bloody and murderous acts, those who made Algerian blood flow, so that such acts will not recur in a democratic Algeria."

— "Opening serious and constructive negotiations between the FIS and the Algerian political leadership," in a neutral country to be chosen by the

two sides.

Mr. Kebir, in exile in Germany since August 1992, said "These five conditions must all be fulfilled" if a negotiated political solution was to be found.

But analysts in Algiers said many of the conditions, particularly trying these responsible for the killing of FIS members, would be impossible to fulfill.

The FIS's top leaders, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, were jailed in 1991 for 12 years on state security charges.

Mr. Kebir confirmed that Mr. Belhadj, the organisation's number two man, had been on a hunger strike since the beginning of the week to protest against conditions in jail.

According to Justice Minister Mohammad Tegui some 5,000 FIS members have been arrested while the Algerian Human Rights Defence League has said several thousand more are being held in camps in the south of the country.

Separately, Mr. Kebir told the London-based Arabic daily Al Hayat, that he condemned the murder of 12 Croats and Bosnian Christians whose throats were slit Tuesday night in Algeria (see page 2).

It was the FIS's first reaction to the massacre, claimed by another fundamentalist organisation, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which has given foreigners an ultimatum to

leave Algeria or face "sudden death."

"Killing foreigners is not in the interest of the people," Mr. Kebir said. "We reject such acts no matter what their source."

"The FIS is not behind calls for murder. The Algerian people and the FIS have nothing against foreigners, who are all welcome in Algeria if they want to cooperate with the people," he said at the news conference.

"But if a foreigner is on the side of the people's oppressors, he is not welcome," he said, adding that "considering the situation in Algeria, a lot of what is happening is uncontrollable."

Mr. Kebir also attacked France and other Western countries for "supporting a dictatorship" in Algeria.

"Not only is world opinion silent, but the Algerian dictators are supported politically and financially by Western countries," he said.

More than 100 people have been killed in unrest in Algeria since the country's political crisis began when the general election of December 1991 was cancelled after the FIS had taken a commanding lead in the first round of voting.

A national dialogue commission was formed to seek a solution to the crisis but no headway has been made because of uncertainty about how to involve the FIS.

Touqan, Muasher elected to top Waed party posts

By Mariam M. Shabih
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The United Arab Democratic Party (Waed) elected a 45-member central committee Friday at the end of a six-hour meeting, which marked the party's first general congress since the beginning of its foundation almost two years ago.

Of the party's 311 members, some 210 attended Friday's conference and participated in the elections, an official statement issued by the party said.

Architect Jafar Touqan was elected president while businessman Anis Muasher was elected secretary general. Both men were elected to a two-year term that is renewable.

The 45 office-bearers of the party include two women. The committee was to elect a 14-member executive committee during its first meeting.

Friday's meeting included a discussion of the party's budget, the formation of party committees and an information strategy as well as attempts to clearly define economic and political policies of the party.

"The party will form committees that will formulate policies in all aspects of public life," Mr. Touqan told the Jordan Times after the meeting.

"There will be some restructuring of the party and more clearly defined policies," added Dr. Muasher.

with scholars who interpret the Koran to preach war. Nowhere in the Koran does it say that we, the Muslims, should kill Jews," he tells a Dutch journalist who asks for clarification of the Koran's relationship with the Jews.

Last spring, at the age of 45, Mr. Abdo and his family decided it was "time to return home." Home for the Abdo family is the sleepy oasis town of Jericho in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, lying 400 metres below sea level just west of the Jordan River.

The families' return was somewhat before the town hit headlines following the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israel accord of Sept. 13. The accord advanced a Jericho-Gaza first proposal to initiate an eventual peace between Israel and the Palestinians based on a land-for-peace formula.

"We had no idea that Jericho would become the centre of world attention," says Mr. Abdo, sitting in Hisham Palace Hotel, which is owned by Mr. Abdo's in-laws and run by him.

The somewhat antiquated 70-room hotel, which Mr. Abdo calls home, is tipped to be the headquarters for a future Palestinian government or administration in the area.

The attention the hotel and subsequently Mr. Abdo have received as a result of the possible transformation of the hotel from a tourist rest-house to a government headquarters makes the hotel a natural attraction for visitors and the media alike.

But as the designated day for the initial withdrawal by Israeli troops from Jericho and Gaza passed, people in Jericho, including Mr. Abdo, felt the first pangs of disappointment in the peace accord which was intended to bring self-rule to the Palestinians living under Israeli military rule.

"Of course we are disappointed, but we also know that this is a long process," Mr. Abdo said.

It would be an exaggeration to say this delay of 10 days is a major set-back, said Mr. Abdo, who majored in political science at the University of Maryland.

Waed struggled throughout most of 1993 with internal rifts after being the first party to succeed in the amalgamation of three political parties.

But the most factionalised member of Waed, Mohammad Oran who unsuccessfully ran for a parliamentary seat in Tafieh, is no longer a member of the party.

The leadership rotated between Mr. Oran, Mr. Muasher and Mr. Talal Al Omari. Friday's vote unquestioningly put Mr. Muasher at the head of the party. Mr. Omari was elected to the central committee.

"We are happy that the amalgamation of the parties is final now and that we are over the hump," said Dr. Muasher after Friday's vote.

U.N.-brokered peace talks aimed at reuniting the island under a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal system were deadlocked last June after Turkish Cy-

Vatican, Israel to sign accord Dec. 30 — Peres

PARIS (Agencies) — Israel and the Vatican will sign a major agreement Dec. 30 expected to lead to full diplomatic relations between the two states, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said on Thursday.

Hailing "perhaps the first real revolution in 2,000 years," Mr. Peres told the French daily La Croix that the accord would safeguard Roman Catholic premises in Israel and the occupied territories.

"Towards the end of December, we will establish diplomatic relations. For the first time in 2,000 years, there will be peace between the Catholic and Jewish worlds," he told a news conference, confirming the conclusion of two years of secret negotiations.

The agreement is expected to clear the way for a visit by Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land early next year, marking a huge step forward in Jewish-Roman Catholic relations.

"The document will safeguard the situation of Catholic institutions in Israel and in the occupied territories," Mr. Peres told La Croix. It would establish a distinction between Israel's political sovereignty and what he termed "the sacred."

"The accord will be signed in Jerusalem itself, ending the great argument about the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem remains politically the capital of Israel and religiously it remains an open city for all faiths," Mr. Peres said.

Diplomatic sources said the accord on the status of church premises is part of a wider 14-point agreement covering issues such as the legal status of the church in Israel, taxation, pilgrimages and a stand against anti-Semitism.

Wider issues such as Palestinian rights and international guarantees for Jerusalem were left to the Middle East peace talks in Washington.

"It's an extraordinary agreement from a historic, spiritual and diplomatic point of view. It's the first time an open, diplomatic rapprochement is under way between the Catholic world and the Jewish world," Mr. Peres said.

He said the accord would be signed by Monsignor Claudio Celli, Vatican under-secretary of state, and Yossi Belin, Israeli deputy foreign minister.

The Vatican, which supports a Palestinian homeland, has always recognised Israel's right to exist within secure borders.

But it wanted progress on the Palestinian question and guarantees for Jerusalem as a city sacred to three great monotheistic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — before agreeing to full diplomatic recognition.

The signing will come a few days before the 30th anniversary of the late Pope Paul VI's Jan. 4-7, 1964 visit to the Holy Land — three years before Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus. He was the last pontiff to visit.

Israeli political and religious leaders, including Mr. Peres and the chief rabbi, have invited Pope John Paul II to come to Israel.

Mr. Peres, in France to promote his book "The New Middle East," quoted a remark by late Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

"Stalin used to say 'how many divisions has the Pope?'" The Pope has no divisions but he has immense influence," he said.

Mr. Michaelides was referring to the presence of more than 30,000 Turkish troops in the north of the island.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 following a Turkish invasion sparked by a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

The resolution, unanimously adopted by the Security Council Wednesday, also extends for another six months the 1,200-strong U.N. peacekeeping force stationed in Cyprus.

It welcomed a recent decision by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali to resume intensive contacts aimed at achieving agreement on a package of confidence-building measures.

"The Security Council clearly warns the Turkish side that it will not put up with Turkish efforts to protract the (Cyprus) problem," Mr. Michaelides said.

U.N.-brokered peace talks aimed at reuniting the island under a bi-zonal, bi-communal federal system were deadlocked last June after Turkish Cy-

prus leader Rauf Denktaş quit the negotiating table.

Mr. Denktaş on Thursday criticised the Security Council for referring to the Greek Cypriots as the sole government of Cyprus in Wednesday's resolution.

"We can't accept this attitude because they (Greek Cypriots) are referred to as the government of Cyprus," he told reporters in Nicosia.

"But as before, we shall allow and assist the peacekeeping force to carry out its duties on the territory of the Turkish republic of north Cyprus (TRNC)," he said.

The TRNC is the breakaway state declared by Turkish Cypriots in 1983 and recognised only by Turkey.

In Ankara, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said the latest U.N. resolution was realistic because it asked Greece to assume a role in solving the Cyprus dispute.

"The noteworthy aspect of the resolution is that it expects Greece to adopt a constructive role in the Cyprus issue," Foreign Ministry spokesman Ferhat Ataman said in a statement.

"We see this as a realistic and constructive approach."

U.N. envoy to return

U.N. envoy Joe Clark will travel back to Cyprus by mid-January to seek the final go-ahead from the Turkish and Greek leaders for rebuilding Nicosia airport and a resort.

The United Nations sees the steps as part of confidence building measures towards an overall political settlement.

appointed to oversee the renovations. "I expect they will turn the hotel into a skeleton and then rebuild," Mr. Abdo says. The hotel was built in 1947, the year the United Nations decided two states should exist in Palestine, one for Arabs and one for Jews.

According to Mr. Abdo, most businesses in Jericho have not yet begun serious building projects, renovations and expansions.

"Before security and stability are established no one will put any major money into the occupied areas. Once the contracts are signed, the army moves out and the police force moves in, and then the pace of development will pick up here," he adds.

The business community in Jericho are hoping that large-scale Palestinian, Arab and international investment will sway public opinion into the pro-peace camp.

"I personally will not believe that this peace process is real till the day the PLO signs the rent contract with me. On that day I know this is all real and not just a dream," Mr. Abdo said.

OSLO (AFP) — Norway's Foreign Minister Johan Joergen Holst was taken to hospital late Thursday, after falling sick on his return from Madrid, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said here. Mr. Holst, 56, was admitted to the neurological ward at the National Hospital in Oslo for the second time in three weeks. Ministry spokesman Ingvar Havnen said Mr. Holst was under constant observation. Mr. Havnen would not give any further information.

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A wild brawl on the floor of the assembly of the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh left at least 50 legislators injured, newspapers reported Friday. Deputies from the ruling Socialist Party-led alliance battled members of the Hindu opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) on the floor of the house for about 20 minutes Thursday, they said. Legislators hurled microphones, water glasses and shoes at one another and a number of deputies were dragged bleeding from the chamber, the Hindustan Times and other newspapers said. Police were called in and eventually restored order but not before 50 deputies and three security guards had been injured. Twenty persons suffered injuries that required hospitalisation in the state capital, Lucknow. Both parties accused the other of starting the brawl. "It's a black day, something never seen in a legislature anywhere in India," former BJP leader Kesarinarayan Tripathi said from his hospital bed. "The governor should dissolve the assembly. The rubor partymen have behaved like criminals," said Mr. Tripathi, who suffered a head injury. The Socialist Party-led alliance upset the Hindu revivalist BJP in state assembly elections held in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, last month. The BJP had ruled the state until December 1992, when the BJP government was dismissed.

Kiss by Mandela sparks controversy

NEW DELHI (AP) — A bus on the cheek between Nelson Mandela and an Indian Muslim actress is the talk of the town. Some Muslims said they were shocked, but others sprang to her defence. The debate began soon after Indian newspapers published a photograph of the African National Congress leader kissing Shabana Azmi when the award-winning actress presented him with a prize in Cape Town on Nov. 29. Mr. Mandela was given the Newsmaker Of The Year Award on behalf of a South African newspaper. Miss Azmi, who played a lead role in last year's film City of Joy, has become as well known in India for her social activism as for her movies. Educators, students and even Supreme Court lawyers have gotten involved in the mudslinging over the Cape Town kiss. The exchange of letters in the New Delhi press seemed to reflect the vulnerability that many Muslims feel in India, where they are a 12 per cent minority among a population 82 per cent Hindu. "As a true Muslim... I am ashamed to come across a photograph in which the Indian Muslim actress is seen publicly kissing Dr. Nelson Mandela," wrote Badrul Islam, of the Aligarh Muslim University, in a letter to the Pioneer newspaper. "It is an act which is both un-Islamic and un-Indian, for it is not in consonance with our culture," he wrote. "I vehemently and totally disapprove of and object to the actress's misdeed."

"Tomorrow the actress may invite someone even to her bedroom on the pretext of it being a 20th century fashionable etiquette," said Islam. "A misunderstood kiss," screamed a rejoinder from another reader. "Mr. Islam, before raising so much hne and cry, should have realised that Mr. Mandela is old enough to be Shabana Azmi's father," wrote Mudit Mittal, a Hindu student from New Delhi. "Next time Mother Teresa kisses a Muslim boy, please don't make an issue out of it," Mittal wrote. "Shame on you, Mr. Islam. Daniel Latifi, a leading Supreme court lawyer also joined the kissing fray. 'None but one with a corrupt mind would doubt that the action was absolutely chaste,' Latifi said in another letter to the editor.